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*Yale Lectures on Preaching*

BY

NATHANIEL J. BURTON, D. D.,

Once Pastor of Park Church, Hartford, Conn.

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EDITED BY

RICHARD E. BURTON

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"I am glad you are reprinting Nathaniel J. Burton's Lectures on Preaching. I have always considered his lectures one of the very best courses in the entire Lyman Beecher's series. I was fortunate enough to come upon these Burton Lectures near the beginning of my ministry, and they left a mark on me which abides to this day. One cannot read them and ever forget them. They were juicy when they were delivered, and at the end of forty years, they are juicy still."

[SIGNED] CHARLES E. JEFFERSON.

Broadway Tabernacle,  
New York City,  
December, 1924.



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## THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

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My Brethren, as a matter of fact, men go into the Christian Ministry—go in genuinely I mean—by the pull of numerous forces ; sometimes in considerable blindness, sometimes in considerable illumination ; sometimes by their own private cogitations in the main, and sometimes with great quantities of advice (and sometimes against quantities of advice) ; sometimes by a rational, prolonged, and orderly process of investigation on the subject, and sometimes hap hazard ; sometimes against the stress of external circumstances and then again as drifted on by strong circumstances almost against their own will. When the anniversary of this theological institution comes around next May, and the ministers assemble in this chapel, for a free discussion of some topic, as their fashion has been, I should like to have them cease from topics for once, and each man just honestly tell how he happened to become a minister. Of course some would not want to tell, because it might lead some young man present (and I should want all you students there), to feel that he might go into the ministry just as they did—that is with as much uncertainty and solemn wondering whether he was not on the wrong track. Of course too, numbers of the ministers, in the present great joy of their vocation, and their present sense of what a holy thing it is to be in it, would be in danger of overstating signs and tokens which are really necessary to a valid call ; and overstating, too, perhaps, the number of tokens that they themselves had when, in the days of their youth, they were considering the question, “ Shall I go in.”

But, taking all those clerical witnesses together, I feel sure that, out of their miscellaneous biographies, you, my young brethren, would get an enlarged view of the variety of God's operations in selecting and constraining his servants. That would overtake you

which overtook me as I went on in my ministry. I went out of this Seminary, as I had previously come out of the house of my father and mother, with a distinct view of the mode in which souls come into the kingdom of God; and of the spuriousness, of course, of all incomings which had not on them the regulation marks of that mode. But presently I began to discover scattered instances of what appeared to be other modes of conversion. Then I found more. And then more. For quite a while I dismissed them as undoubted spurious cases. They must be. But when they grew thicker and thicker, and when on selecting some of the best cases of ripe piety that I knew, and inquiring of them how they came in, I learned one thing for certain—namely, that it was not by my way, I gradually emerged into the idea that God was not so narrow as I was, but worked in grace, as he does in visible Nature; along certain great established lines, to be sure, as for example that spring and summer shall come once in about so long, and with fixed general features; but within those lines, in a most vast and beautiful diversity, just as the spring and summer give us almost more sense of diversity than of uniformity.

And as God calls men into his kingdom in more ways than one, so does He into his ministry; as you would find, I say, if you could get a chapel full of honest men to tell their story.

I knew a man, who took it for granted always from his youth, that he was to be a minister if he ever became a Christian. And why did he take it for granted? God only knows. He had never been so instructed by his father and mother. His father was himself a minister, but he had not conversed with this son as to what he should be. For some reason, right or wrong, he had not. And so far as the son knew, these parents had not been moved to ask God that this particular one among their sons, should follow in the footsteps of his father. And yet, that young man was as settled in the idea that, once a Christian, he should be a minister, as he was that once born, he should have to die some day. And he was so disinclined to the profession that he refused to be a Christian, with such a corollary attached to it. He refused until near the end of his college course. But then he yielded and moved easily and without a struggle to his predestinated work, and in that work had many most clear and comfortable certifications that he was in the way of God's choice for him. Now that man was under a curious bondage, and the question is, was it a divine bondage. The conviction which held

him was not rational, in the sense that it rested on perceived reasons, but it may have been none the less a divine conviction. God is not tied up to processes of rationalization in getting men to do what he wants them to, and means to have them. On the contrary, three-quarters of his work in ordering human affairs is covert, we must suppose. If his power were put in only in those few instances where we see it, or are conscious of it, all things would go to wreck. No ; he moves invisibly in the great kingdom of human wills, and bears the creation on to his own issues ; notwithstanding the vaporing of men, and their swollen self-consciousness, as though they were lording it here, shaping their own destinies, and preparing the future of the race.

Now I do not present the example of that young man as an ideal towards which other young men are to strive. I will even admit, if you insist on it, that his call was pretty nearly the minimum of all calls—and dangerously small—but I name it as an encouragement to any here who have not been able as yet to make their call as large as they would like ; for this man of mine seems to have had proof enough in his subsequent experience, that that first dim experience, and blind energy of conviction which tied him to the Christian Ministry, was indeed God, choosing a blind way, rather than an open one to accomplish his ends.

It were possible to prepare a whole lecture on God's blind ways with men—he preferring that way in numerous instances, in part, I suppose, because if he undertook to explain to his small and fumbling creatures, they would not half get hold of it ; and in part, because the way of faith as distinguished from the way of sight, is full of wholesome discipline for us ; and in part, too, because the magnificent surprises of God's eventual disclosures as to the benignity of his obscure methods with us, will make us feel more than contented that we were detained here in a long twilight, and stretch of guess-work. We know that all our personal affairs are in his hands, and all eternity will be filled with tokens of his most blessed management of them.

But I am discoursing on the numerous ways in which God gets his ministers—and I wish to make them seem numerous in order that I may comfort all earnest hearts here present, in which God is really making out his call, whether distinctly or only darkly as yet ; and while I am willing to acknowledge the value of a resounding call, something full of symptoms supernatural and therefore full of im-

perative persuasion, I much desire to bring out the unquestionable facts of unresounding calls, thousands of them, calls that cannot be heard at all except as you listen closely ; but which, reverently heeded, may grow at last to thunders of assurance.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, in tracing his own pedigree, and ministerial outstart, could not, with all his fine imagination, make out for himself a regulation call. To be sure he had a mother, who carried him in her heart, body, soul, and spirit, mother-fashion, but silently in the main. He was in the way of knowing that she had great desires for him of all sorts—or rather he was in the way of feeling that, because she scarcely spoke of it, as I said :—these deep mothers with their unfathomable, speechless broodings, are not without a witness, especially where their boys are particularly clairvoyant ; and their undeclared will and longing works like a fiat often, and makes destiny for their beloved three times more than much hustling would, and an officious clatter of teaching and entreaty. At any rate, Bushnell always felt a certain stress upon him, mother-born somehow, and he became a Christian, and then a collegian, and then a graduate, and then after a little, he clearly settled his mind to be a lawyer, and not a minister. And he wrote a decisive letter to that effect. At that juncture, that long-silent mother broke silence. The fact was, in all the mothering of that boy antecedent to his birth, she had mortgaged him to a particular service and that service was not the law, and she, being about to have all her sacred thoughts and clear assurances thwarted, apparently, by the eccentric snap-judgment of her mysterious Horace, took a sudden hand in the fulfillment of her own prayers, and spoke out—all dumbness is not of inability, but, as often as any way, of wisdom, and of God's seal set on the lips—she spoke, and said : “ You have settled this question inconsiderately, so far as I can see. I ask you now to wait till you can consult your own mind. I think you had best accept the tutorship in Yale College that has been offered you.” There she stopped in mid-volley. A lesser woman would have marched on into an argument for the ministry—the opening for it seemed good—but a person who could hold her peace twenty-six or seven years, could wait on God a little longer ; peradventure, the law being staved off for a year sure, various gracious pressures would have their chance to get in on her son (which they did) ; and so, on that whiff of chance wind, one of our greatest men was lodged where he belonged ; and was able to write nearly half a century afterwards :



"As I look back on the crisis then passed, it seems very much like the question whether I should finally be. No other calling but this ministry of Christ, I am obliged to feel, could have any wise filled my inspirations, and allowed me sufficiently to be."

So, this man was not misplaced among human callings, by the wilfulness of his mother, moaning and wandering in false inspirations, but he was set to his life task—well, by many things ; some of them plain enough, some dim, some very dim, and some absolutely undiscoverable at present, no doubt ; but whether it was the constitution of his mind shaped in all sorts of gestations ante-natal and other, or the many inworkings of the Holy Ghost, or the force of external circumstances, all the causes head up in the far-away choice, selection, and will of God—this primal all-knowing will started for its chosen and choice man by innumerable paths, by ten thousand intermediates, by straight marches now, and now by the most laborious and mysterious indirection, by delays, by reverses, by apparent total defeats ; but like the tortuous river, it failed not to find its way, and reached its end, and I insist that God not merely permits his ministers to find their calling in these groping and accidental ways, but delights in it—not as unable to delight in other ways more illumined all along and more full of comfort, therefore, to the anxious man, but as pleased to make his providence on earth a versatile thing. And while I am on this subject of small calls, I might as well mention to you that Dr. Bushnell, telling the story of his mother's mother, related that, up in the wilds of Vermont, whither she had emigrated from these parts, she started a religious public service, laying it on her timid husband to offer the prayers, and putting in, to read printed sermons from Sunday to Sunday, an Unchristian young man, whom she had quietly sized and sampled. She seems to have been a woman who had some look of faith in her eyes, so that men succumbed to her bidding ; and when after a time, she had concluded that her young man had the natural making of a minister in him, she proceeded to furnish the supernatural, by a notice served on him one day as he came from the pulpit, that he must be a Methodist minister. "But I am not a Christian," said he. "No matter, you are called to be a Christian, and a preacher both, in one call, as Saul was." Of course, this peremptory woman did not deliver this summons till she was sent to do it. This youth had been much in her prayers, and she thought she knew what she was about. Therefore, the blessed spirit, when he had caused young

Hedding to be assaulted in front in this way, did not fail to assault him in his soul also, and he was not disobedient to his call, but fell in straightway, and when I, a little boy, saw him as Bishop Hedding, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I thought he was the greatest man I had ever seen, up to that date ; and he certainly was one of the most respectable and serviceable men in the communion where he spent his life. I do not deny that Bishop Hedding's call grew to be large enough, by and by, but when it was first delivered to him it seemed to him little—too little to go on—only the sudden dictum of one woman, and she not infallible, one would say. But, fallible or infallible, God used her. And he used that sermon-reading to get Hedding ready for the crisis that was to come. And, if we could get back into all God's secrecies, we should find that the fuse for that explosion had been laid long ago, and had not been permitted to be blown out by the thousand winds of heaven.

I give you these personal instances, my brethren, which might be multiplied to any extent, because I would like to have it appear, beyond a peradventure, that God uses his liberty, in moving men along into his service ; uses it clear to the borders of eccentricity, as men would say. If he wishes to secure an ambassador and newsbearer of his grace, by a hand laid on him heavy as doom, he does it—and oftentimes precisely that is his wish—but if he wishes to secure you or me by a touch scarcely discernible, as some almost unstatable impression in our feeling, an impression which we cannot make seem tangible and solid to anybody outside of ourselves, or some slight concurrence of circumstances which seems to have omens in it, then He takes that way ;—and if a man's ministerial call takes the whispered and scarcely articulate form, let him not despise it, and if it comes to him like seven trumpets, let him not be made proud, and be brought to the conclusion that God's whispers have no authority in them.

But now, having said so much by way of leading you along into an elastic conception of God's ways in this great business of multiplying ministers, I am willing to spread out before you the elements and items of what is customarily considered a full-toned and ideal call. I can see no hurt in mentioning them, especially as I shall try to forestall all hurt from them by an occasional remark by the way.

First, then. If a man has gifts, he may be a minister—and examining committees always feel bound to start the question of gifts.

Has the candidate any intellect, and has the moral region of his head any size? Can he think? And when he thinks does he produce anything, ordinarily? Is there any ethical sound to the movement of his mind? Does he know anything? Can he tell to other people what he knows? Can he tell it in an engaging manner, so that if we start him out as a preacher, somebody will be likely to want to hear him.

And then passing from his mind to his exterior make-up, what physical gifts has he? Is he a person whom one can look at with any comfort? What sort of a voice has he? Has he lungs, and a degree of digestion, and an affirmative physique all around, rather than a physique negative and peeping.

These, and the like, are the endowments that we like to see in a young man who begins to surmise that the Christian ministry is his proper pursuit.

At the same time, in order that we may not be too knowing in this matter, and may not fall into the delusion that God is shut up to ten-talented people, for the accomplishment of his works, behold what mighty men some weak men are, in his kingdom and work-field.

I was considerably instructed by what I once heard from the lips of the Rev. William Taylor, the Methodist evangelist who has preached his way clear around the world, once at least, and has not found even unknown languages any bar to great spiritual success. He paused, in his journey, at South Africa, and soon found himself at the head of a powerful movement of God among the natives of that region. And one night down in the bush, there was heard a phenomenal outcrying, the like of which no man ever heard before. It created some alarm, as though some wild animal might be in the woods there; but a company of the bravest men started for a search; and the animal proved to be a deaf and dumb Zulu, on his knees, in great agony of guilt before God. They reverently withdrew, and left him to his lonely wrestling; and after two or three days, and a few more religious meetings, the man came out in great joy, a Christian convert. And they took him into the church, a clear trophy, and baptised him William Taylor. And, after things had gone on a little, William applied for a license to preach. He had no conceit about it, as though he was a suitable minister for the settlements, but he thought he could push out into the back country among the dark-minded inhabitants, and do some good. After one of the public services, the missionaries were discussing his strange

case in the chancel, William standing by and earnestly watching their faces to see what the upshot might be, when one of the ministers, touched by the sight of him, handed him a testament as a present : whereupon William was delighted as being now licensed, as he supposed, and he pushed straight off for his preaching ; and Mr. Taylor testified that God used the man, most evidently. Of course his oratory was meager. Many of you, young gentlemen, have felt that yours is, but you are all very eloquent compared to him. He could do nothing but pantomime. But what there was of his oratory was so sincere and earnest that men heeded him, and caught the sense of the few fundamental things that he tried to teach ; and some were conscience-smitten, and sent to God for his mercy, by this poor incapable soul, imprisoned in eternal silence. To be sure, some of the back-country people came down to the station at last for a change of ministers ; just as in the case of most of us, a change of parishes is found to be best after a certain time ; but so long as he lasted, William was as much sent as St. Paul was.

This is the strongest case of weak things made mighty in the ministry of reconciliation, that I ever heard of ; but I have heard of a good many like it—and, in running over the list of my acquaintances who have unquestionably succeeded in our calling, I have found so many who had no natural right to succeed as being particularly able men, that the question of gifts has long ago ceased to be the major question with me. It is one question, but not the decisive one. Settle it either way, in any given case, and the examination had better proceed all the same. If the candidate is a genius, very well, and if he is not a genius, very well ; let us look him over still further.

The second sign of a real ministerial call is found in a certain convergence of the man's circumstances towards the work ministerial. Perhaps he has absolutely no money wherewith to get a suitable education for the work. Perhaps he is tied to some present duty, which hinders ; as the care of his aged parents, for example, or the carrying of a business from which he cannot withdraw equitably. But these obstructions, and a hundred more, are not entirely decisive, as many a strongly-resolved and powerfully-pushing man has found. The ways of money-getting, if you are thoroughly concluded in your own mind to get it, in order to the service of God, are almost perilously numerous in these days. The young student burning to be a minister is the delight of the Christian world.



Societies are organized for him. Dying men remember to establish permanent funds for his benefit. Sewing circles consider his case. Uneducated relatives take pride in it, that a person of their own blood starts out to represent the family in the educated walks of life. Adult ministers all about, recollecting their own early struggles, are filled with pathos towards him. And in addition to these ordinary, natural, calculable furtherances, if he be a true man, he will have windfalls dropping in on him now and then in such a curious way as to seem preternatural. They come from unknown sources perhaps. Or they come from eminently unlikely, and humanly impossible sources ; from the pocket of a life-long curmudgeon it may be, a man never known to relent before, a man whose relenting in the one case was the wonder of the town. I knew an instance where a divinity student was overtaken by just that phenomenon. Yes, all things are possible to God, and from the day that the smitten rock opened out its floods for the watering of all Israel, the men of God are entitled to look for dashes of the uncommon in their own lives, together with many good strokes of the common and the natural, so that our second sign of a real ministerial call, namely, the co-operation of circumstances, is a good enough sign if you have it, but not a cause of despair, if you do not. What hosts of us can rise up and testify to that. The modern materialistic philosophy is pounding away on the imperative domination of circumstances, and we are all set, soul and body, in the rut of a mechanical fatalism, but every living man of us knows, that while the press of circumstances is very cogent sometimes, yet the chiefest circumstance in the creation of God after all, is the free-born, and puissant soul of man, and that the ordering of one's own circumstances, especially as the individual man is yoked in with the will of God, is the one splendor and the one zest of life ; the heroism of all heroism, and the magnetism of all living history.

The third indication of a young man truly called, is the united advice of judicious friends. That is very valuable. Often a man is better known by others than he is by himself. He under-rates himself—or perchance, he overrates himself—and which is worst for a minister I hardly know. Sometimes I think that, inasmuch as exact self-measurement is just about impossible, the exaggeration of conceit is more profitable than the exaggeration of humility. But, take advice, brethren—take advice. Bystanders are more unprejudiced than you are. People of large experience in the

affairs of life—old ministers, and so on—know what sort of men are fitted for affairs, and whether you are, even approximately, that kind of man.

Find out, too, what the church in which you were reared thinks of your adaptations—and what the congregations all about think, to whom you have incidentally exposed your abilities, on whom you have laid out your earnestness from time to time, and, possibly, practiced your oratorical arts. When I came to the serious work of shaping myself for life, I found that the rustic assemblies in several country school-houses, before whom I had discussed questions during the long winter evenings, for the relief of my own mind, had made up a silent verdict on my case, which they were now willing to put in as a makeweight in my favor, on the whole—and I leaned back on them, or rather on certain persons in those assemblies, with a satisfaction, made up partly of pride, partly of gratitude, and partly of an unanalyzable pathos towards the rank and file of human nature.

But, friends, we must not lean too much on even so good a thing as advice. I like the saying of one of our ministers: Advice is to help a man do as he pleases. That is putting the matter unqualifiedly, but all the sententious and golden sentences of the world, are made sententious by their heroic suppression of qualifiers.

Who advised our Lord to go on? What Christian in those parts took any stock in Saul of Tarsus as a preacher, when he first set up to be one? Who was ready to license that deaf and dumb Zulu? Who could persuade the church-bishop of York to accept as candidate for deacon's order that non-collegiate old slave-trader and man of sin, John Newton? And when scores of us now living were approbated as gospel ministers, what a considerable negative vote, spoken or unspoken, was rolled up against us.

On the other hand, what scores of men have been wafted into the ministry on unanimous gales of judicious advice, and have practically shown the miserable fallibility of that advice. I myself once had under my hand a theological student in the first stages of his education, over whose head all the stars of destiny seemed to conjoin; and we supported him, prayed for him, and boarded him around in our houses, free board; but the root of grace in his heart proved feeble, there was a constitutional strain of unmanliness in him, and he grew slovenly in his ethical distinctions; and to tell the truth mildly, we could not any longer put up with him. "I have

entertained a Devil unawares," said one of our Christians, where our young man had had some months of good board for nothing—and we all took back our judicious advice that he go into the Christian ministry.

The advice of mortal men is valuable, but not infallible.

Up to this point, now, I have delayed in the region of what may be called the natural signs of a minister, but now, at last, I propose to have a word with you on the signs supernatural.

There are men in the world, who hold that all the call into the ministry a person needs, or had better exert himself to get, is a good concurrence of those naturals on which I have discoursed. Let him put his unexcited common-sense out among them, and see how they stand, just as he would coolly settle any secular question on the hard facts presented. Let him enter our holy calling in that reasonable and not particularly inspired way, and do his work there conscientiously; and all the supernatural things that are desirable, lights, warmths, empowerments, gifts of the Holy Ghost, will come in and do their part to make him a success in the world.

Theoretically, the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist, the Baptist, and I do not know but every church on earth, Greek, Latin and Protestant, holds to the coefficient presence of the natural and the supernatural in every veritable ministerial call. And their offices for the ordination of ministers are all shaped to that idea; but in the Greek or Latin branch of the Catholic Church, and even in the Protestant Episcopal branch of it, if all the requisites of good order, and church order, were met and satisfied in the case of a young man, they would receive him into their ministry with less supernatural marks upon him and in him, than the Methodists, for example, would demand. And if a young man seemed to have any amount of those marks on him, and in him, but at the same time, had somewhat disorderly and unchurchly about him, or had in him any strong exuberances of mysticism, those grave and cautious churches first mentioned would want to look him over three times, before they admitted him to holy orders—whatever of the Holy Ghost there might be in him, they would disrespect to that extent; but the Methodists on the other hand, and numbers of other denominations, would admit him more easily—not doubting that so sane an influence as the spirit of God in that young man would ultimately reduce his unbalance and

his irregularities. Meanwhile, life, even in an occasional rampancy, is better than the first-class property of death, and no inspiration at all, they would add.

So easy is it, under much unity of abstract doctrine on this subject, and much sameness of ordination forms, to have a certain amount of practical diversity.

My brethren, having now stated the different particulars of a valid call, as partly natural and partly supernatural, and having spent some time on the naturals, I desire to put in an energetic testimony in behalf of God's direct and explicit part in the calling of his servants and ambassadors. Of course our natural gifts are his gift—and our circumstances are of his providing and our good advices are his messages—and therefore there is a sense in which these natural things are all supernatural, and that sense of things we need to bear in mind, with reverence and gratitude ; but over and beyond all that, God may serve a notice on a man in wonderful ways—in ways that force the man to say, "Lo ! God is here with me—in me—all through me—through and through—calling me—pressing me—making me seven times willing, expectant, and self-consecrate." The leading instances of that sort of call in Holy Writ, are pretty familiar to you. Abraham had one, when he left Mesopotamia to become the father of us all ; and having had one, he went on to have many—notably his summons to sacrifice Isaac. And inasmuch as this stateliest of primitive men, and original corner-stone of a universal divine kingdom, was a man of repeated calls from the skies, we naturally look to see his successors distinguished in the same way, and so they were. Isaac was. Jacob was. Joseph was. Moses was most remarkably. He undertook to beg off from one of his vocations, on the ground that he was no orator, just as many of us plausibly might, and as that South African dumb man certainly might. "I cannot go to King Pharaoh, I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue," said he, (Ex. 4, 10) ; whereupon his vocation was reiterated upon him in a very moving and compulsory manner.

All the Prophets, too, had calls—calls marked by a strong array of externals and naturals in some cases, but marked by supernatural tokens and special inner movements in all cases. I wish there were time to recite the picturesque accounts which numbers of them have given of their own calls. Isaiah was in the temple when his came—and he saw God there in visible, high enthronement, and he heard God speak in the speech of men actual and understanda-

ble ; and there were visible seraphim and seraphic voices, and the poor awe-struck man's lips were touched with a living coal by one of those strange, superhuman personages ; and taking the whole scene together, there was enough of the transcendental and amazing in it to more than furnish forty modern men with a call of the rather rationalistic and purely common-sense kind which some consider sufficient. (Isah. 6.)

Jeremiah too, had a similar elaborate call, wherein he was informed that from a point anterior to his very birth the predeterminations of God had lighted on him for the prophetic office. (Jer. 1, 5.)

Which reminds me I ought to have said that Samuel, the first in God's line of official seers, was a very emphatically called man—or boy rather, for God drew nigh to him when he was only a boy—and looking back along the history of that boy we discover that God, working through the prevision and the holy yearning of Hannah, his mother, had him consecrated to His service ere he saw the light. (1 Sam. 3, 14.)

And we are told that even the mechanics, and skillful workmen, who were to put up and adorn God's holy temple, had certain mystical empowerments vouchsafed to them.

Of course the stiff church idea of ministerial calls gets some comfort for itself out of the fact that the Jewish priests were born to their function, the office being hereditary ; but in the original consecration of the Aaronic priesthood, once for all, God came forth in explicit marvels to give, on the spot, a supernatural authentication to the proceeding, and make out a call that had in it every conceivable aspect of a call ; “ which, when all the people saw,” (says the history,) “ they shouted and fell on their faces ;” (Lev. 9, 24) ; they were awe-struck by the miracle there wrought in sanctification of Aaron and his posterity. Moreover, all along the line of those priestly generations, God threw in his special attestations now and then, and even in the routine of their priestly service, worked in as a part of the structure thereof, there were incessant corruscations of the supernatural.

But I must make haste into the New Testament period, and as we enter it, are we not pressed upon by an irresistible prepossession that the glory of the old system, in the matter of which we have been speaking, will be at least kept up in the new, inasmuch as the new is but the old brought on to its fullness and final re-



splendence. So we should naturally judge, and so it is. The New Testament conception of a call, is particularly strong on its supernatural side. We have moved down now into the era of the Holy Ghost, and, because we have, we notice a slackening of marvels external. There are enough of them—Saul had them in his call—Jesus had them in his—all the Apostles had them sooner or later in confirmation of their ministry—still, things went to the interior more, and the idea of the inner light came to be more emphasized.

However, all I care now to insist upon, as in the line of my subject, is that God's ministers in those days did not get into their ministry by a deliberate and business-like consideration of prudentials on their part, and then a decision to go in, making out their own call as it were ; but they had laid upon them a supernatural compulsion, or a rather irresistible stress—a voice out of the sky in Paul's case—a personal call from Jesus in the case of the Apostolic twelve—a solemn casting of lots in the case of Matthias to take the place of Judas the Apostate, (which lot-casting was an old time divinely accredited method of discovering God's will, and not a piece of mere hap-hazard, by any means) : these were the ways of God in those times, when he would fill up the number of his servants—and on these New Testament and Old Testament data, the church at large has always stood and preached the doctrine of ministers supernaturally called. Called of God as was Aaron, and not self-sent, must they all be. The doctrine has been carried over clear into moonshine in individual cases ; and possibly whole denominations of Christians have landed in vagaries of mysticism on the point, for the time—and these personal and denominational vagaries have been such a standing warning to all beholders, that many, being much determined to be thoroughly sensible, and a little more, have studiously eliminated from God's calls every least suffusion of the direct supernatural. It is the indefeasible privilege of finite and foolish man to swing from one exaggeration to another ; but in the midst of all extremes on this subject, the thunderous great voice of the general church has persistently affirmed the right of God's ministers to be called—by earth-born voices no doubt, such as circumstances, mental gifts, personal piety, committees, councils, the archbishop of York, and all the rest—but by heavenly voices as well, and principally.

My brethren, I started this lecture on a low key, perhaps you thought, but I have got it up now, you see. And yet not so far up,



I hope, as to disavow my first thought, that men may become ministers on a small and feeble call. I gave some instances of the small call, you may remember, and I showed some sympathy with those instances—but I have great sympathy with instances more sky-born. Feeble calls are not things to be aimed at, and striven for, but things to be put up with rather, when our higher aims and strivings do not seem to bring us into the whole fullness of God. God's fullness is what we want. Calls may begin feeble (they often do,) but as the years go on, and our work goes on, the call ought to go on, too, from strength to strength, being more and more articulate, affirmative and inspiring. Men who are young, and of only a few years of religious experience, and a few years of religious study, may innocently have less vision, less sense of God, less ability to tell a divine thing when they see it, or separate a still, small voice of celestial authority from the ten thousand terrestrial noises with which it is mixed up—may innocently have less of everything, than those who are far on in the ministry; but a minister whose call begins feeble and stays feeble, never had a call in all likelihood. There come lulls in everybody's call. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. And we behave fearfully and wonderfully sometimes. And whether it be ourselves or our circumstances, or the machinations of creatures invisible, the truth is we have sinkings, and collapses, and comatose moods, and general retirements of our faculties, spiritual and all—nevertheless, every minister ought to have a growing sense of mission, on the whole; he must not be all lulls. If he loses his call some day, he must get it again, and if he be a true minister, he will.

There is a band of music moving about the streets of the city, and it is curious to notice in what alternating swells and falls it comes to you. Now you hear it, and now you hear it not. A waft of wind has caught it. A line of buildings intervenes. Or, possibly, the musicians themselves have ceased from their strong blasts, and are moving through their gentler and half-inaudible passages. So is it with this other, and more heavenly music; the music of God's voice inviting us to be co-workers with him in the Gospel of his Son. That great, authentic voice comes to us through this and that medium, even as the air at large is made to deliver itself melodiously through the several instruments of the band; but for various reasons, some innocent and some not, that one dearest music of our life, as chosen men of God, finds its ways to our ear inconstantly. Various unpardonable winds sweep in. Various infirmities, whereinto

we were born, and from which we cannot wholly escape, interpose their confusion. Possibly an occasionable miserable gust from the outlying hells of the universe points this way, to hinder our hearing. And, possibly, God himself, at intervals, for wise reasons, slackens the clear vigor of his call and we are left to listen for his gentler tones. All this is incidental to a life on earth. But no real minister will consent, or will be called upon to consent, to a life-long loss of his supernatural commission. By and by, the old music will come back. In some watch in the night, in some moment of prayer and mourning, in some studious hour, in some praying assembly of God's people, by some bed where a saint lies dying, in the uplifted delivery of some sermon ; somewhere and before long, he will catch again that voice of voices, that call of his Heavenly Father, and straightway his work will be transfigured before him again, and he will bear into it as with the strength of ten.

Blessed be God that he does not forsake his servants.

## MAKING SERMONS.

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If almost any preacher should offer to tell me just how he managed in making his sermons, I should certainly say: "Go on brother, I am eager to hear you." I have heard quite a good many tell, some common and some uncommon ones; and I have settled my own habits so that no amount of testimony would be likely now to make any serious improvement in me; nevertheless, just as much I should want to have that man give me his story. "Nothing appertaining to humanity is foreign to me," said a Latin writer long ago; and in like manner, I do not know that there is anything on earth so interesting as a preacher and his habits, to preachers.

So then I have concluded to raise courage to give you who are here present my notions and my methods in sermon making. My methods are the result of my notions, and my notions are the result of my methods. There is a reciprocal motherhood there, which does not seem quite natural at first, but is natural enough when you look into it.

We start out into our methods in all fields of effort, under the push of some preconceptions, there being no reason why we should take one course rather than another, in sermon-making, or in anything else, except those foregoing, and more or less established ideas; and then, if it so happens that those ideas, subjected to experiment, are practically validated, behold they (the ideas,) get great refreshment out of those validations, and are set up in their own conceit as though they were made for the first time, self born; as is copiously illustrated in the realm of science, where some tentative thought, some bright hypothesis, starts a line of explorations, and those explorations, in their turn, confirm the hypothesis. A mutual motherhood you see.

Ah, well, mutuality is the greatest law we know of!

I. The first thing to be considered in a sermon is the getting of a topic ; and on that I would exhort you to a large range of freedom. Keep within the lines of Christianity ; you had better, no doubt, because you are Christian preachers ; but be careful to see those lines as sweeping a very large circuit, and be careful to hold yourself privileged to plunder all creation beyond those lines for material wherewith to enrich your truly Christian discourse. There is a powerful and most miscellaneous immigration to these North American shores, but there are forces here to Americanize these multitudes ; it is all right, let them come. And if preachers are energetically Christian, the immigration into their discourses of the total population of the world will do no hurt, but, on the contrary, will load them up with valuable stock.

I find that topics come to me from all points of the compass. Time was when I preferred they should come to me from the Bible, and I had a kind of guilty feeling if they did not, but I could not control the matter. Everything started my mind off in discourings ; my newspaper, my secular books, my contact with all sorts of men, the accidental things of my life, and the accidental things of other peoples' lives, the talks of my brethren in the prayer meetings, politics, my walks abroad on the face of nature, my summer outings—a thousand things—the mind has front doors on all sides—and pretty soon I began to keep a book of subjects, wherein I put down everything that seemed to have large and discursible contents in it, whether Christian or heathen. I did it instinctively, and I see now that I was right. Do not be afraid of a cosmopolitan accumulation of material, but look out that you diligently grind it all down in the hopper of a regenerate and Christianly determined mind.

II. Well, you have selected your topic I will suppose, and what you now want is a host of thoughts on that topic—the more the better.

On reaching that crisis I do this ordinarily ; I go to my desk and my pen and my paper, and there sit waiting for thoughts. I open all my windows hospitably, so that if they want to come in they can. And they almost always want to. Somehow they hear that I am there. Why do all the winds of heaven pour down towards a vacuum ? Why do all the birds of heaven pour down through zones and zones seeking the summer ? Why do all the waters of the world drift down towards any hollow anywhere ? And why does all heaven move towards beseeching souls ? No matter why. So it

is, and that is enough. And it is enough for me to know that somehow my waiting mind there in my study is universally advertised, and excites a universal good will towards me, so that my windows are filled with inflocking thoughts, according (I am compelled to say,) to the size, and what not, of my mind. Exactly here, comes in the differences between men. I can conceive of even a minister's sitting there, with all his windows lifted, and no inflockings. Some physical stupidity has hold of him. Some exhaustion has come, some anxiety, some clatter in the street, possibly some mischievous unembodied spirit from out the Somewhere that skirts this life of ours. But a man cannot have been a minister a great while without getting on to a point where, ordinarily, the currents of creation will begin to flow his way when he takes his place there at his desk. His mind may be a plain one and not over-sizable, but if there was enough of it to start in the ministry and get on a short time—really get on—it will have thoughts, more or less, when it takes its position and waits for them. Sometimes they will come in multitudes. Another day they will simply straggle in. And another day, as I said, for special reasons, they may not come at all.

But, come they profusely, or come they very scattering, all that do come I record on the spot. I record the large and magnetic thoughts, of course (if any such happen along,) but I record the little ones too. I record everything that can be spoken of as amounting to a thought on that chosen subject of mine. And I keep on in that way so long as thoughts come at all. No doubt by that time I have what some would call a very heterogeneous and unusable mass of material—a perfect chaos precipitated there on my paper. But they are mistaken. They know not the beautiful sanity of the human mind and the beautiful coherencies on which it insists, always and instinctively. All those items there recorded are strung on one string, and are no hotch-potch at all, because the mind that waited for them at the desk and got them, waited in a certain status—it was not a vacuum by a good deal, but a mind occupied by a chosen subject, as the love of God, or the ruin of man, or the passion of Jesus on Calvary; and whatever thoughts come to a mind thus preoccupied, and in that particular status, come they from here or there or yonder, or from regions most remote, will assuredly be in every case, and without one exception to all eternity, congruous to that mind in that particular state. A rather striking fact when you look at it. I heard a lecture many years ago on The

Laws of Disorder, and this fact which I have just given you, the profound fact that all minds have thoughts harmonious with their nature, and on any given occasion harmonious to their special state for the time being, so that the thoughts are not a medley, but an affiliated multitude—that fact I say, may well come in as one illustrative item under that brilliant caption—The Laws of Disorder. I energize on this point a little because I have heard of men objecting that this way of securing the stuff of sermons secures a mass of unrelated items, and makes a sermon just an omnibus of unclassifiable particulars. I say it is not so. And I give a good reason for saying it, to wit: that, in the nature of things, only those ideas drift into a waiting mind preoccupied by a subject, which are germane to that mind in its special mood or state as thus preoccupied; and if all the ideas floating in are thus germane to one mind, they must be germane to each other; and there is no getting around it.

When I speak of a waiting mind I do not mean a non-affirmative, non-energized, Mr. Micawber sort of a mind, waiting for something to turn up, but a mind intent, a mind that goes to its windows and looks out and longs, and thrusts forth its telescope to find something. A mind thus intense, investigatory, and practically beseeching, amounts to a tremendous loadstone in the midst of the full-stocked creation—full-stocked with the materials of thought—and when this or that comes into the windows of such a mind it is stamped by that mind, and specialized to its uses, with a threefold vigor, and all the incomes thus explicitly stamped are the more explicitly germane to each other, and visibly of one species.

I insist on this original exertion, this doing of one's best without the help of books or anything else; I insist on that, as the first step towards a sermon, because only by that kind of exercise does a man grow to be a real and fertile thinker, whom endless production does in no wise exhaust, but does continually replenish rather; the mind of man being not a pond that can be drained off by a few years of sermonizing, but an artesian well, a constitutionally up-bubbling thing, so long as life and health hold out. I congratulate you, young gentlemen, that you all have that practically infinite thing in you; and that as you go on in your ministry you may be more and more conscious of this inexhaustible exuberance, and may move in the joy and courage of that consciousness.

I insist upon original effort; that, rather than reading to begin with, for another reason. In every mental act there are two factors



involved ; the thinking mind, and the external materials which it manipulates ; and men may be classified as original and productive thinkers, or as copyists, plagiarists, and forms of echo, according as they dominate this their material, or are dominated by it. But the most ignominious person in all the world, if so that he have one remaining spark, or last flicker, of manliness in him, desires to be a man of supreme generative force and not an echo ever ; and this he can secure only as in the handling of subjects he thinks with all his might before he reads, as I have already described. Let him go from that desk of solitary effort on his theme to any amount of reading on it, and those readings instead of overloading him and smothering him, and making his whole movement stupid and unwieldy, and giving every listener to his sermon to know that it is in reality a borrowed one, will be athletically, victoriously appropriated, assimilated and turned to use, being coined and made his own visibly in the mint of his own vigor. Moreover, coming to the books bearing on his topic—the commentaries and all the rest—his mind within him will be so vital and informed by his preliminary meditations and creative acts, that it will gather up the parts and elements of those books that are suitable to his purpose, and usable, with a double rapidity. I have been surprised many times, after I have diligently gestated a subject myself and then have started out into my library for the say-so of other men on that subject, to notice not merely in what a lightsome and expert way I handled them, but also in what a swift facility I utilized their many volumes ; —sometimes one glance will answer—and if I encounter a book wherein the entire subject is opened out profoundly and in a complete treatment, considerable portions of the book I catch up with a touch and go, and the denser parts cannot very long delay me. This sounds boastful, but it is not. Almost any man may make the experiment for himself. And I advise you all to make it—and to keep making it so long as you live.

Some of you perhaps would like to say to me, “ now that very rule—first think and then read—does not apply equally well to all kinds of sermons ; ” so let us look at that.

If the sermon is purely expository, our one duty is to tell exactly what the sacred writer meant to say in the passage before us—where then does that original and generative effort of which I have spoken set in, and can it come in at all? I answer, it is a notorious fact that one man will find three times as much in a

passage as another—find it, I say, not put it in, as the manner of some inventive gentlemen is, whose spirit is imaginative more than historical and to whom the Bible is a partially hollow vessel requiring to be humanly filled. No, they will find large contents in the passages that they expound; because they are men well trained in creative thinking, and bring that training to bear on scriptural passages. My practice in expository work, is, at the start, always, to expound the scripture in question myself with what strength I can muster at the moment. Somehow that gives me a good glow, the Bible and I get on to brotherly and joyful terms with each other, I have laid myself down on the heart of it and felt its vigor first-hand; and now if any commentator wants to speak a word with me, very well, let him speak; it will not embarrass me at all.

Or, perhaps, the sermon to be produced is an altogether historical one; a sermon of information. Very well, in that case, I acknowledge the first step is to get that information—and that brings in reading. But there are two ways of reading; one the memoriter way, the mere gathering up of facts, and the other the thoughtful, brooding, creative way; the way that finds great subjects all along in the stark events of history, so that they are not stark (not at all) but eminently relational and prolific. The sand-atom is stark, the seed-atom is not, and history is a seed-ground—it is so in fact, and it is so as read by original and originating minds.

So I do not see but my—Think first, and read afterwards, holds pretty well all around.

III. We have now reached the third step in the making of a sermon. We have our topic; we have assembled our materials; and the next thing is to organize those materials; for let it be said to the credit of human auditors and congregations, they refuse to be blessed to the full by unarranged and disorderly masses of sermon matter, thrown out with whatever fine delivery, or whatever moral earnestness. It must be organized. And in that business of organization, a real master-workman has a good chance to show himself. Anybody, almost, can drag together the timbers for a building, but only a person of skill and invention can do the next thing.

Now, the materials which you have amassed, can be put together and made an orderly unit, in half a dozen ways—perhaps more; on what principle therefore shall you select one way rather than another? I reply, if you are going to organize your subject simply as a subject, and not as a means of good influence on your hearers,

perhaps there are a number of ways of doing it ; but as God's servant sent for the salvation of men, you do not want to be a man of subjects and no more ; you will surely fall out of your vocation and be a lecturer, and intellectualist, if you go on that principle—one of the most mournful forms of suicide ever heard of ; a called man lapsed from his calling ! God save you from that.

So you must ask yourself, in every case—what do I wish to accomplish with this sermon-stock that I have on hand. When that is settled, the form of the organization to be made begins to be settled. Get your aim, and every least item of your stock of material spontaneously shapes itself to that aim ; as all things followed the music of Orpheus. A clear aim, firmly held, works the following results.

It saves you from treating your sermon as a work of art, and fashioning it under an artistic impulse merely. When it is finished it may be a work of art, sermons frequently are ; but it has come to be so incidentally and not of your set purpose. Your purpose was to bless men, and in so far as your discourse is after the forms of art, and is therefore beautiful, that high and lordly intention of yours did it. Let it not be thought a strange thing that a God-fearing and noble intention should thus show an esthetic result—the pitiful thing is that such an intention does not always secure an esthetic result. Every minister has a right to have his mind work beautifully as well as truly, so that while truth-lovers shall admire it, people of taste can too. In the several provinces of art, literature, painting, music and sculpture, it is often said that the artist ceases from real art, necessarily, the moment the thought of utility or human advantage in his work is permitted to take hold of him. If he undertakes to be a preacher to men he is no longer an artist, and his work shows it. That is the idea.

No doubt, many who were by nature preachers, and who greatly desired to do good, have resorted to art-forms, as the means to their end, and have marred and mutilated art by thus harnessing her in to their purposes of utility ; but that was because they were preachers and not artists—it being possible (though not easy) to be preacher and artist in one ; possible but not easy—not easy, for example if you write a novel to impress a truth, and would never have thought of writing the novel excepting as that truth had possessed you ; almost certainly the strenuousness of your moral intention will warp you away from the absolute exactitudes of the beautiful—so that the

safest rule for ministers and sermonizers is, take a good aim at the needs of the congregation and let high esthetics take care of themselves, considerably. If they get into your sermon, very well, but do you keep your utilitarian intention as a preacher, high up, strong, steadfast and solemn.

The second use of getting an aim before you proceed to shape the materials of your discourse is, that you thus save yourself from all divergencies and rhetorical dallyings as you pass on, from all unprofitable self-consciousness. Multitudes of sermons are much occupied with their own selves. They stop to make nose-gays. They stop to posture and make themselves agreeable. They stop to see how good an argument they can make. They fall into a mania for minute elaboration. They are detained in forty allurements. Meanwhile, the people out there who are listening to that sort of sermon have a great deal of leisure to admire the fine points made and praise the rhetoric, and say within themselves—"What a tremendous preacher we have." That preacher has forgotten to have any aim. Those men in the pews, if really addressed and yearned over, could not get a chance to make those leisurely remarks of theirs. Preaching is in order to salvation, in God's idea, and if the sermon went for that point-blank and forever, it could not be otherwise than a sermon of a certain sort—a sermon that is, free of every dallying, every ambitiousness, all posy-work, all self-conscious smartness.

And I may add, it would be likely therefore to have unity, which is an indispensable virtue in all expression expected to take a mighty hold on men.

And once more, in a single word—an explicit aim, as you begin to consider your materials of discourse and try to pull them into shape, will show you what parts of the mass may be omitted from the organization you are about to make—omitted as not relevant to the purpose which you have chosen.

I want to testify, though, from out of my own experience, that it is curiously little of that material you will be called upon to discard ordinarily. As a rule, you can work in nearly the whole of it, and make it serve an orderly use in your discourse—the reason being, I suppose, that each item of the whole is related to every other item; that relation being caused by the fact mentioned by me before, that the entire accumulated mass came in as brought in by a mind in a particular state, as filled by a selected topic. It is a pleasure to

know this, for when we have laboriously got our sermon together in the crude stock of it, our feelings are hurt to be compelled to throw away any of it.

It has been the sin of my life that I have not always taken aim. I have been a lover of subjects. If I had loved men more and loved subjects only as God's instruments of good for men, it would have been better, and I should have more to show for all my labor under the sun. As I look back upon this defect, the principal consolation I have is that a Christian subject, even when it is unfolded simply for its own sake, may have some wholesome magnetism for the people who have contact with it.

I have spoken thus far of a supreme aim at the welfare of your hearers, as a very great advantage in several respects, but especially in this fundamental business of getting your sermons organized; but that business is so fundamental, and your sermon is something or nothing so entirely according as it has some good shape or not, that you must pardon me if I din on organization a little longer. Given an aim, some things are settled, but not all. It is settled that no sort of stock and stuff must come into your discourse that is inharmonious with that aim. And it is settled that whatever stock and stuff you do put in, shall be so put in as to consort with that aim, and further it.

But very likely there are several conceivable forms of organization under which these necessary particulars will be reasonably well-secured; and we want to know now how, out of these several forms, the right one may be hit upon.

Here I bring you face to face again with the differences between men—the differences original and the differences acquired. In some kinds of mental work, one man is as good as another—just as in the humdrum of ordinary life a coward is hardly distinguishable from a hero; but as in a great emergency, (in shipwreck, for example,) the awful dissimilarity in men suddenly stands out, and a day of judgment is come, so in certain sorts of intellectual performance there are men and men, and a single hero may be worth an acre of ordinaries.

One sermonizer has but to look at his sermon-matter and it straightway trots into organization, like the horses of a fire engine when the alarm bell rings; but another man fumbles his materials for hours, and then hasn't much of a sermon. The first man's sermon is a shapely tree, the other's just manages to be a tree,



but in all sorts of disproportion. Still, the intuitiveness of that first man, and his supernatural mastery over the stuff in hand, while at first it may seem to you just an ultimate fact, and beyond all explanation, a simple, direct endowment of God, it being God's prerogative to elect A to intuitiveness and Z to fumbling and the like ; behold, it certainly is not altogether an unanalyzable fact. The out-springings of intuition are the composite result of original endowments, and of good training, and of much practice.

Millions of people had seen apples fall from trees before Isaac Newton saw his apple and guessed the law of gravitation—a magnificent out-jump into the unknown. Why did not they all make the jump? First, I confess, because they were not the jumping kind, perhaps, most of them. We are not all born to the same thing. But secondly, because Newton by long study, and a large ingathering of scientific data had provided for himself a first-rate standing place for a great and infallible jump. He did not launch forth from the known into the immeasurably unknown, on the gush of a simple impulse to launch. That sort of stone-blind irrepressibility is of no account. There is no law in its movement, and it never comes to anything. It would not guess gravity in a hundred thousand years. But Newton, I say, while he did not lack impulse, had a considerable knowledge of the secrets of the physical universe, and quite an acquaintance with the way things are wont to go on out there—just as I can prophesy on the as yet unknowable parts of a man's life, whom I have summered and wintered with, and variously taken to pieces in my analysis.

So then, your intuitive organizer of sermons, is thus expert because he has studied his business, and has exercised himself a good deal in experimenting on the principles he has discovered. He has discovered that an aimless organization is void of one first principle of organization in pulpit discourse. He has discovered—perhaps some one told him and perhaps not, but he has found out, some how—that there is a philosophical way of formulating a discourse, and an unphilosophical way ; a way in which one thing leads on to another according to the eternal and universal laws of thought, and (what is more), according to the profoundest of those laws, and a way in which one thing springs out of another by a connection so shallow as to amount to practical incoherency ; and he has discovered that the incoherent way confuses the people who listen to him, and thus steals away their right to get some good out of the



time they spend together—also he has discovered that his own mind when called to make a discourse on an unphilosophical plan, has seven times the labor and affliction to get on, and get out, that it need to have, just as you and I may tug ourselves to death trying to handle great weights that a porter will manage easily, because he applies his strength in a rational manner. Also, our sermonizer has discovered, that if for any reason he or his people wish to remember his sermon, if it is philosophically put together, they can remember ; whereas, if it is unphilosophically put together, neither he nor they can retain it except by one of those absolute and stark acts of memorization which may be very interesting as phenomena and as showing what the human mind can do when thoroughly put to it, but which are a dreadful strain to the average man, and are of no special value, either, in the general development of the mind. Perhaps the minister preaches memoriter, or perhaps he preaches from a brief, and in either case his work of recollection is trebled if his sermon is fortuitously thrown together, or is developed from point to point under the lesser and more trivial laws of mental association, rather than under the great laws ; as where his score of memoranda gathered by original effort at his desk, or gathered from books, are made to root all in one comprehensive thought and sentence.

I could illuminate this matter much more, if I could take time to spread out before you actual specimens of rational work, and of incoherent work, in sermon-making.

But I was praising the intuitive organizer, and trying to let some light in on his secrets. First, he has brains to some extent, though not necessarily to any alarming extent ; and secondly, his discoveries, one and another—such as I have just enumerated—he has experimented on. He has made aimed discourses—and unaimed ones. He has made discourses on philosophically articulated skeletons, and he has made them on ram-shackling and forbidden skeletons. These forbidden and impossible skeletons he invented when he was young and had not practically learned the differences of things, or when he was too weak to do other than impossible things. Latterly, since he became knowing, he has practiced the logical sort of plan, the philosophical, the genetic plan, wherein one thought vitally out-branches from the thought foregoing ; the plan rememberable, the plan that is a plan (and the only one that deserves the name). And now his mind walks in among his accumulated memoranda, like a farmer into his harvest fields ; and lays things out in orderly

swaths, in absolute unconsciousness of the principles on which he operates. See that girl pound that piano ! She knows the principles on which she is operating—to her sorrow, and may be to the sorrow of all listeners. But see her ten years later. She just careers, without a thought of principles. She has passed out of love into gospel and moves unlaboriously and lyrically. Likewise there may be a lyrical organization of a sermon—a spontaneous rightmindedness therein ; a philosophical movement full of melody to the inner ear, because philosophical—for a profound orderliness is always musical to the appreciative mind.

The question is sometimes raised, how plainly a preacher had better show to his congregation the skeleton in his sermons. I should say, as a rule, just about as plainly as he shows his own skeleton. If there should ever come up a serious doubt among a people whether their minister has any skeleton, he had better show one. A purely unformulated and gelatinous physique in a public man were disagreeable, and fitted to give his congregation a painful sense of insecurity. I have heard numbers of men complain of Ralph Waldo Emerson, when they had just heard him lecture, that his mind meandered from point to point in almost unmitigated haphazard. Said a clerical friend of mine—a bright man too,—“it sounded as though he had opened his scrap-book and given us page after page of that, consecutively—for a lecture.” I knew better—for there was never born a more coherent man than Mr. Emerson in all the substantial and profundities of coherency—and I never could have had the face to ask him to appear any more consecutive than he did ; but, perhaps preachers do well to show their skeletons often enough to create a general feeling that they always have them. In some instances it may be desirable, for some reason, that the people carry away the sermon in a form to report upon ; in those, let your plan come forward into unmistakable visibility—the heads and all the members, italicized and full-spoken. But more often than anyway I think it is just as well to keep your frame-work a little retired. I do not believe that the highest kind of discourses, the intensely vital and powerfully magnetic ones, the sermons that are most full of their author, in his totality and his inspired vehemency—I do not believe that kind enjoy being shown skeleton-wise. They do not care to be remembered, in their details, by the people. If only they can make all minds alert, and all souls warm and assimilative, while they go on being delivered, they are satisfied—those sermons

are—as convinced that they have thus accomplished their highest possible good. Sermons of instruction, systematic courses of sermons on points of divinity, may well be put into a form to be easily remembered, but sermons of quickening are different. They can quicken enough, without much display of structure. If a sermon is a real birth and out of a man's living interiors, and not a mere mechanical result of the constructive intellect working among objective material, it will always have a thoroughgoing, reasonable plan; precisely as each individual of each species of animals, as being an outcome of life, will have an unmistakable, and specific and satisfactory skeleton; but these vitally-born sermons will always incline to be a little Emersonian, and modest, in their display of plan. And they can afford to be, that is, they can afford to lose what force and consolation there may be in a plain skeleton, because they are so charged with the elements of life, and are so life-giving.

It is time for me now to remark :

IV. Fourthly, and lastly, on that agony and despair of many inexperienced sermonizers, called amplification; amplification, I say, which in strict definition is not making a few thoughts go a long way, by powerful inflation, but clothing your outlined sermon in a full-sounded corporeity of actual, ponderable thoughts, all of them relational, of course, to that outline with its first, second, third and fourth, of main thoughts.

Let me draw an illustration of this matter from the lecture I am now delivering.

First, I resolved to give a lecture here on sermon making. That was exceedingly notional, and well nigh inevitable, because I was to address for a few weeks here, a congregation of embryo sermonizers.

Next, I resolved to have the scheme of my lecture on sermon making stand thus: The topic of the sermon—The accumulation of the material—The organization of it in a suitable scheme—The amplification into the full written form. That scheme grew out of the fact that a sermon has in it those essential particulars—and it was therefore just about forced upon me. It is good to have the path of duty made plain by a powerful press of circumstances.

Under the first head—The Topic—I got all the amplification I could delay upon out of the idea that sermonizers had better be quite free and copious in their range of topics. And there I might have stopped, but I paused long enough to put on a rider in the

cautionary remark, "You must be careful to make this your wide sermonizing, your selection of topics from the entire creation, safe, by keeping your ever-sermonizing mind intensely Christian." Several other items of amplification occurred to me which I did not use. This, for example—how shall a man determine the order of his topics ; by the order of the Christian year as in the Protestant Episcopal Church ; by the ever-fluctuating state of his congregation ; by a pre-arranged round and round of theologizings, and applications thereof to life ; by the to and fro of his own mental idiosyncracies ; or by what?—a fruitful inquiry, you see, and having amplification enough in it for an hour. Moreover, I had thought I might mention this curious little fact :—that a topic selected on Monday, say, snuggled away in the mind, and let alone there, absolutely, for three or four days and nights ; not being brooded and worked over at all, I mean ; on examination at the end of that time, will be found to have sprouted into a very considerable affair—your mind has seen to that unconsciously—you have had nothing to do with it—and (what is stranger still) experience proves, (my experience does) that if you had been sound asleep all those four days, some sprouting would have come to pass. Scores of times after I have gone to bed Friday night I have made a little stir in me, and got my next Sunday's sermon decided on, and then on waking Saturday morning have noticed a marked advance in me of that topic—it has swollen—it has put out feelers and drawn in correlative thoughts—very likely it is all ready for me to begin writing on.

That was one of my intended amplifications. And still another amplification that invited me, was a careful statement of the reasons for my assertion, that a wide array of topics is better than a narrow one.

Now notice ; another lecturer, even if he had had the same scheme, would have made a different amplification of that first head, The Topic—where then do amplifications come from, and how can a poor, dry-minded, constipated mortal get them ? I answer : there is only one way, and that is to amplify the man. At any rate that is the first thing. I know, some if amplified to the extreme limits of human amplification, would not be voluminous amplifiers. Their organ of language is small. Or they have an inborn silentness like Gen. Grant, and the North American Indian, and like many a big-headed and much-thinking man in the back-country. Thomas Carlyle used to preach that amplification is the worst known cure,

and Mr. Emerson seems to have been caught in the same sorrowful idea now and then—as for instance, when he wrote :—“ come now, let us go alone a whole Pythagorean lustrum, and be dumb.”

That doctrine may do for some, but not for ordained preachers. What they want is volume and facility. And the way to get it, I say, is to make the preachers themselves voluminous. That first. Any natural silentness in them can be dealt with after we get them enlarged. We don't want the dam opened till there are waters back of it. That was what angered Carlyle ; that there should be so much openness, and sound, all around, and so little real flow.

The amplification of men, as preliminary to solidly amplified discourses ! A large subject. But there is where discourses come from—from men !

For example :—When I said—a preacher's subjects should be taken from a wide field, I said it out of the observation and study of many years. When I said, a thoroughly Christian mind in a preacher will surely christianize all subjects that come into it, I said it as having noticed that, hundreds of times. When I said, a whole Friday night's unconscious incubation on an idea, will hatch out a sermon often, I said it because I have hatched them, and know. When I said, under another head, that if a man goes to his study and sets his mind bubbling on a subject, and faithfully records every bubble, those recordings will be mutually related, and will take their place naturally therefore in the sermon which he proceeds then to organize out of them, and not one bubble be lost very likely ; I said it out of my own experiences on the point, repeated hundreds of times.

An amplifier then—a real one—a solid one—a nutritious one—an amplifier, who, while he has some diction, is not all diction—an amplifier whose movement is a reiterated birth-throe and an eternal refutation of Carlyle's doctrine of silence,—such an one has lived years and years (this business takes time, and a young man need not despise himself if he does not feel absolutely inexhaustible right off)—he also has read a good deal, has read digestively, and with a constant appropriation of facts, principles and vitalities—moreover he has done mountains of solitary thinking—he has become a methodical thinker ; that is, when his mind moves down upon a subject it does not go helter-skelter like a flurry of volunteer citizens into an enemy's country, but with the organized orderliness of an army, wherein each man is a two-fold force because a unit in an organization. Method is power ;—he has become a methodical thinker,



also he has learned that most teeming of all secrets, the secret of analysis ; and now, whatever subject comes under his inspection, suffers what the nebulae of the firmament suffer when brought under the astronomer's glass ; what is single becomes plural, and the plural more plural, in an endless process of separation. In nothing are sermonizers more differenced than in this ; one moves in large and excessive discursiveness, and gets his amplification by sweeping into his sermon a great amount of external material, anecdotes, history, personal recollections, the last book, the last murder, and so on, (all good when well used,) which he has come across in his objective travels ;—the other man chooses a single thought, or principle, (the more single the better,) and proceeds to explicate it, fundamentally ; he runs it back to its roots, he knows before he begins that that thing so simple and innocent-looking on the face of it, has any amount of contents ; more contents than he will know what to do with when he gets into them. So he gets into them, he defines, he analyzes, he analyzes again, he pursues things into their relations, he finds that the universe is one great ganglion and that any subject is a universal subject ;—the good amplifier has learned to analyze, I repeat ; and finally (for I must hasten) he has been through a multitude of joys and sorrows, he has known love with its many zests and its many inevitable lamentations, he has seen the dying die, he has looked out on the wide woe and mystery of life, he has become full-hearted and full-minded, and now, when he is called to face assemblies of mortal creatures and speak to them, he has somewhat to say, and he feels sometimes as though he could speak forever. He may not be voluble, (God forbid) but he is heavy laden with meanings, and oftentimes in his common sayings you will catch the flow of a deep undersong, just as in many a word of Jesus, given us especially by St. John, it has sometimes seemed to me, for the moment, that I could scarcely endure them, they are so fraught with seriousness, and tenderness, and foreboding, and moral firmness and majesty, and I know not what besides, as of a man speaking out of an infinite experience, out of an infinite meditateness, and out of infinite agitations of sensibility. A great man makes a great sermon, and O ! what clear effects of greatness are made now and then by quite measurable and even moderate men, who have turned their powers into the service of God with a complete consecration, and have opened themselves to the infloodings of his blessed Spirit.



My Brethren, I should naturally end here with some attempt to discriminate between a sermon and a lecture, my idea being that a sermon gets to be a sermon, and saves itself from being a lecture, by being made, and delivered in the Holy Ghost.

I had thought to cover that ground on another occasion, but I shall not, I see now.

## ORIGINALITY IN THE PREACHER.

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I am about to speak to you on originality in the preacher and I will try, to begin with, to get down to some clear and vindicable conception of Originality. Accepting a clue from the word itself, I should say that an original sermonizer is one who originates the thoughts that he uses. That seems obvious. But a man who does that is sure to have certain other peculiarities springing out of that ; and, in the popular apprehension of the subject, therefore, an original man is one who not merely originates the thoughts with which he stocks his sermons, but also has thoughts in practically unlimited quantities—they swarm him ; and, moreover, they are very observably different from those of other men.

An original preacher then, has those three marks. First, his thoughts are his own ; next, he is fertile in thoughts ; and next, he is different from other men. Those three elements, I say, enter into the general idea of Originality. In strictness, he is original who originates ; but he who originates, is therefore prolific, and unique ; and it is sufficiently exact for our present purpose, if we include all that under the one term original.

But now, as to that rather great matter of origination, let me ask :—Where do our thoughts come from ? When a preacher originates his own, where do they come from, and when he gets them somewhere else, where is that somewhere else ? An important question for men who are public preachers and who are required to speak ten, twenty, thirty, and more years to the same congregation, except as the perpetual play of death and birth withdraws a familiar

face now and then, and sifts in an occasional new mind : Where shall thoughts be found, and where is the place of them? Many a young man in the first agonies of production, feels like replying, in those other words of Job : " Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, it is not in me, and the sea saith, it is not with me. \* \* It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. \* \* Where, O where, shall wisdom be found and where is the place of understanding." And even middle-aged ministers, of a certain second-grade sort, are not without a touch of the same lamentation at times. " Why did you leave Philadelphia," said I to a partially light-weight doctor of divinity—" Because I had nothing more to say," he replied, frankly, from the bottom of his heart. And after a few years, I noticed in the newspapers, that he had moved on again. He hadn't yet discovered the hiding place of wisdom. A friend of mine summed up that whole class of preachers under the head of " squeezed oranges." Their first one, two or three years, exhausted their entire sap, and since that, they have been in a condition more easily felt than described. A condition in which, let me add chirklly, no man has any need to be. I consider it no egotism to say that I never saw the day when I was not pretty conscious, that the fountain which gave me my last discourse was more than able to give me another, and then another and another, in everlasting undiminished flow. Of course when you have taken out of yourself several thousand sermons and small talks, you know your own mind something better than you did when you had taken out only a dozen ; and are more assured of its bottomless fecundity ; but I courageously maintain that every mind (except a fool) is bottomless, and as non-exhaustible as the waters of the sky ; and if that Philadelphia man touched bottom in his mind, it was a delusion—it was not bottom—he did not know how to handle his own mind—he had not come into the secret of generative intellectual methods—he might as well say he had gone down the whole sub-marine five miles of the Atlantic Ocean, and was able to declare its shallowness.

But where do thoughts come from? They come from just two sources, namely : from your own interiors, and from the manifold, endless exteriors, by which all men are surrounded :—these exteriors being gotten hold of by reading, and by observations and by experience. As to thoughts from the interiors, I may say of them,

that doubtless even they are heavily charged with exterior elements—that is, all of a man's reading, observation and experience, his whole life-long, has gradually passed into his structure and substance, to make his originating mind exactly what it is at any given moment of origination, and to make any given product or thought of his mind precisely what it is ; but those exterior elements are not in him in any way of recollection ; in that thinking of his from the interior he is not conscious of exteriors ; his whole feeling is like Belshazzar's ; I did this—this idea is mine—nobody told it to me—I never read it anywhere—or, to draw on Job again, this path no fowl knoweth, and the vulture's eye hath not seen it ; it is my secret, my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—just as the spider says proudly :—"that web is this individual spider spun out," although all the while he knows, if he is an educated spider, that the inward material of those fine yarns, are the amazing result of the vital processes of his body, taking the various external spider-foods and working them over by some unsearched chemistry into a brand new form ; a form as unlike the component foods of which it is made, as mud is unlike the heaven-white lily into which it runs up.

It is the one distinction then, of the class of thoughts which I have called thoughts from the interior, that they seem to themselves, and are, in-born, in-generated, not beholden to any conceivable thing in the universe for their origin, excepting to that live mind there privately thinking.

Now, I suppose that most persons, at first, would say :—only such a thinker as that is original ; and the preacher who gets his sermons from the great second source of possible supply, the source objective, books, nature, life, the million-voiced say-so of the much-speaking human family, he is not original ; he is a borrower, and very possibly a plagiarist :—he is not a conscious plagiarist in most cases, but if his discourses are remorselessly looked into, it will be found that they have a strong savor of other people, and do not savor enough of his own self—he certainly is not original ;—the original man pours forth always from his own contents.

All that is true, but it is as possible for the profusely objective man, the great reader, the great observer, the great man-of-affairs, the great memorizer of facts, events and minima, the excur-sive and wide-plundering man, it is as possible for him to be original in the profound and self-evolving way already described, as it is for the man who never reads, and never observes at all, but sits in

his studious solitude, in severe abstraction, and takes good care that what thoughts he has shall be his own and shall smack most relishably of his personality.

I admit that, if a man leads an intellectual life strongly external, and is a diligent in-gatherer, there is danger that his original powers will be buried under by his acquisitions, and he therefore not be original ; but this bad result is not necessary. If he thinks more than he reads, if he spends more time over his riches of material when collected than he does in collecting it ; if while he is collecting it, he is analyzing it, searching for its underlying principles, generalizing upon it, in short, rationalizing on it in the use of all the higher forces of his mind ; if he reads reflectively, critically, ruminatively, judicially, and does all his excursive work in a thoroughly attent and vital way, then inevitably what happens to the spider happens to him ; the foods of his mind become mind, they increase his mass and his potentiality, they modify the quality of his intellect, they are subtly distributed through his entire mental organism, his entire personality, in fact, just as all our physical food atoms, after proper transmutation, are infallibly distributed for the repair of our bodies and the replenishment of their vigor. And when all this has happened to our much-reading man, and he is called upon to put himself forth in discourse, behold ! there is nothing plagiaristic about him ; he falls now under the first class of thinkers, the indisputably original men, he is not conscious of his materials, neither is any one else aware of them ; the fact is, those materials have eternally disappeared in him, and all you see is a man ; an originating man :—theoretically we know that there are a great many good books in that man and a great grist of other things, a sort of maelstrom he is ; but visibly we cannot prove it, we cannot lay our hand on the books and the grist ; when he speaks, it sounds just as Adam sounded in Paradise before he had read a thing or fairly seen anything ; his contents are all vital and assimilated, and the only way you know he ever read anything in particular, is the same by which you know a strong and digestive eater, namely, his mind has blood in it, and endurance and endless performance and when he gets hold of you, you feel that your doom is at the door.

I like to describe this sort of God's creature. There is somewhat magnetic in him and the touch of his splendid virility is enough to make one feel himself immortal.

I suppose you have seen these thick-set, sappy, disgusting green

worms, that stretch themselves out on the twigs of the trees and lazily eat the green leaves, and eat, and eat, forever ; and are so lazy that they will not take the trouble to transform their green food into a decent flesh color, but lay it around on their miserable bodies unchanged (so it looks—I use the language of appearance, of course.) Well, those creatures represent the preachers who are overloaded with undigested externals. The leaves they have eaten show everywhere. You can tell what they ate last. Sometimes they put it forth in plain lumps, the original thing without a pretense of *reductio ad pabulum*, though more often it is disguised under some show of transformation. But it is a low and stealing piece of business—the whole thing—and they have no right to preach.

But whereunto shall I liken the better sort? They are like yonder flowering bush. It has lived on several kinds of rather unpromising food. It has eaten dirt. It has even taken up the insufferable rankness of animal decomposition. And, better and more decent, it has nourished itself by the air and the light, and the rain, and the subtle cool ministries of the night. And lo ! the rose. That plant had life, and vital cunning, and knew what it was here for. That plant was original. It needed much material, but it did not propose to be lumbered by it. No, it struck for a complete victory over its material—and got it. For what can be more complete than to make over dirt, and the like, into a rose-leaf, that blooming, beautiful, fragrant, and almost spiritualized thing, a thing so exquisite that God might pluck it for himself in heaven. There is originality for you.

The flower is original ; the green worm is a visible plagiarist.

If I have now sufficiently defined the original preacher, I am ready to draw out a list of considerations in defence of originality and in praise of it.

And, First. Referring to the original man, as different from other men—dwelling a moment on that particular element of originality, I submit to you this fact—that every mind born into the world is specifically unlike every other, by the operation of irresistible causes ;—as much unlike certainly, as each human face is unlike every other that ever was or ever will be ; which fact does not look at all as though God meant his creatures to be otherwise than dissimilar one from the other. If the new-born mind is in every case unique and unprecedented, why should it not be developed in the



line of that original start. Why rub down its face-marks in a blasphemous attempt to make everybody alike? Why conventionalize it by slow degrees! Why work over its aboriginal tone, till you could not tell it from all other tones. God does not operate in that way in Nature, neither does he thus work anywhere. Every animal has his race-lines, every tree has its race-lines, every plant its characteristic career. Even that sappy green worm—to tell the truth at last—is a perfectly individualized creature, and when he is green, it is not because he has consented to let the leaves he eats register exactly their own color on him, but because as he proceeds with his digestion and what not, it is a peculiarity of his constitution to prefer to be green, just as it is constitutional in the lily stalk to prefer to blossom white, and in the rose to prefer that fascinating flush of which I spoke. Likewise, every spring is itself and no other, and every morning is, and every cyclone; and every tide-swell has its recognizable idiosyncracies. Likewise, in the unfoldings of history, God strikes in to make the great movement racy; each era has its own features, each crisis gets to be a crisis by foregoing preparations that are original, and each crisis dissolves away into the common flow of events again in a manner quite its own.

Why then should any one be afraid of originality in men, and in preachers. Why want to have us all twins, and fac-similes! all think alike, express ourselves alike, look alike, sound alike, in a weary, universal humdrum of thought and life. I recollect the perils of originality, and shall throw in a cautionary word or two on that point by and by. Meanwhile, let us all accept our birthright, and calmly be ourselves.

Again, only those who are original speak with authority. There is a tell-tale tone in the hearsay man, which he cannot suppress. I suppose it is the ineradicable integrity of the man's nature, refusing to put off on the public a stolen thing. He wants to do it, and intends to do it, and tries to do it, but lying is cross to certain principal parts of our nature, and no bad thing can be perfectly carried out, thank God. Murder will out. So will borrowed preaching.

When I said, those who are original speak with authority, you thought of our Lord, I presume; as you well might, because the entire secret of his weight of speech, was that he spoke what he himself had discovered and nothing else, and had discovered a good deal to speak. There were traditions enough in his land, and in his training; there were prepossessions, prejudices, bigotries, a powerful

quantity of book-lumber oppressing the public mind and a thoroughly elaborated and imperious conventionalism, after the manner of all very old countries and races ; and into this great system of fixed things, and respectable things, and things prescribed, Jesus came with his wise, direct, intuitive eyes, his absolutely unbiassed mind, his eyes of infinite, original discovery, and what he saw he said, with the calmness and courage of first-hand knowledge. On the one hand no egotism and on the other hand no flinching ; and those people who massed about him and listened, felt a power which they could not explain, in any full analysis, but which they explained well enough, and better than they knew, when they said :—"He speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes." He was an original man ; and his ministers have a right to be, in their measure.

Every now and then the travelling agent for some book wants me to put my name down in certification to the value of his volume. "But I never read the book," say I, "and I am so situated at present that I cannot read it." "But here is a list of eminent clergymen and others who have read it, and are all delighted with it. It is the safest thing in the world therefore for you to give me your name." To which I reply :—"Nothing were safer, as respects the risk that I shall lend my name to a poor and sloshy volume ; but my name there written in your great array of names will be taken by many people to mean that I have myself examined your book and do therefore and thus know it to be a good thing. Not one in a score of the people, taken as they run, would surmise that I am not an original witness in this business. Almost the whole value of my name lies in their lamb-like trust in me at exactly that point."

So the man never gets my name. I am not going to be a public preacher for that book merely because a body of intelligent doctors of divinity, a hundred strong perhaps, together with a hundred laymen equally intelligent, have discovered it to be an excellent publication, and are preaching for it.

And I do not see but, in all preaching, the original witness is the only one. My Brethren, it is one of our main distinctions that we are witnesses for Christ. Theoretically, that is according to all Biblical teaching on the matter, we are that ; and then, so far as public power is concerned, we do not amount to anything first-class, and irresistible, except as we are witness bearers. In other words, we must deliver our own thoughts—or what is the same thing, we must be original. If we dispense theology, it must be

strictly the theology which we ourselves have been able to discover ; or if we pass over into the emotional field and discourse on matters of experience, we must get our great emphasis out of our own experience, and in so far as we preach the experiences of other people, unverified as yet in our own hearts, our perceptive hearer will note that there is somewhat hollow in the resound of our emphasis. A photograph of a landscape is one thing, and the photograph of that photograph is another, always and most visibly. It may be a nice picture, this last—in fact it generally looks smoother and handsomer than the other somehow ; moreover the natural scene of which it professes to be a representation is plainly there—nevertheless everybody much prefers the first photograph—there is a refreshing realism about it—it is a transcript of the originality of Nature herself—it is, as we say, an original picture.

So the preacher ; in order to be realistic, he must tell what he knows, and not be dressing up the discoveries and experiences of other men.

But here some one of you in his own mind will interpose the suggestion—"We young men, have not had time to discover much, neither have we had any great range of experience ; nevertheless we are on the eve of being preachers, and we are on the eve of being overhauled by an ecclesiastical body, which will want us to have a clear opinion on all theology, and will very likely withhold ordination if we cannot stand up to all the Articles of Faith of the Christian body to which we belong ; And now, Mr. Burton, what shall we do ? We can't be original very much, we can't be witnesses more than about so far, and yet we seem to be about to be forced to talk very large, and talk from one to two hundred times in a year.

Well, that does seem to be a crushing state of things, and I shall enjoy remarking upon it.

I think it is plain that you must retail some hearsay, but in so far as you are incorrigibly honest to the bottom of your heart, you will instinctively put forth your hearsay with some subtle indication, somehow, that it is hearsay.

A friend of mine was once put in a tight place. He was called upon to act as showman to a stereopticon, for an evening. Half of the views to be exhibited were taken from Europe north of the Alps, and half from Europe south of these mountains. Now it chanced that my friend had never been south of the Alps, and, as I had, he urgently besought me to mount the stage when

he had done northern Europe and do the rest. But I declined, feeling and saying that he could beat any of us, whether he had visited the scenes or not. For he had, in large measure, the gift of speech. So I went to the lecture with perfect confidence, but awondering in the secret depths of my mind, after all, whether the lecturer would slow any when he crossed the Alps. At first he did not. He had got up a good momentum, and he went over kiteing and struck Italy with the realistic air of all observers. It seemed to me that he was going to take us through that new country and not let out his ignorance. But he had been in the ministry a good while, and his conscience began to bother him, I suppose, and he pretty soon seemed tired, and at last stopped and confessed. He said he had not been there, but would go on as well as he could. And he went on and was most interesting, too. I would not have had him stop for the world.

Gentlemen, when that council ask you, as a member of my ordaining council asked me by way of determining my soundness on the subject of the Trinity :—"If the Holy Ghost were killed would it kill God ;" do you say :—"I will make shift to answer, but I am young to the councils of God." Because it will be interesting to have you answer ; and a comfort. And after you are settled, and must preach on many things that you have not been able as yet to explore in thoroughly original effort, when you go over the Alps, you may reasonably slow up a little. I should certainly go over. There is a south-lying Europe—a rich, beautiful, historical region ; and the fact that you have not been there does not alter that. Millions have been there. So you had better glib along and tell what they say. It would be dreadful to confine your congregation to Northern Europe, merely because that is the only part you have visited. God's creation is pretty large. And his grace-region is pretty large. And what we cannot personally visit, we had better read about, and then proclaim as hearsay. There are plenty of witnesses to certain points of doctrine and experience on which you are not a witness ; you are too young and you have not thought enough nor prayed enough—and you thoroughly believe their testimony, and therefore, when you give it out to your people you need not do it in a half and half way, though you can never really thunder and boom, and jump into the emphasis with your whole weight and in perfect gusto, except when you are displaying the north country scenes.

And your people will let it be so. They are not fools, neither are the ecclesiastical councils fools. All sensible councils prefer that the young man should not be too knowing. They like to hear which way he is headed, and what he best likes, and a few things of that sort—and they like to toll him out into deep-sea soundings to find how well he can tread water, and whether he is honest enough not to pretend that his feet touch bottom—and after that, and possibly a flirt or two of gymnastics among themselves, unnecessary but entertaining, they are ready to go on and do the thing that ought to be done, namely, put the young man into the ministry with congratulations, thanksgivings, and their best love.

It is not easy to draw the line between Authority in religious things, on the one hand, and Individual Liberty on the other—or rather, the line is easy enough, but it is hard to live exactly upon it. The line runs thus :

In so far as I can search for myself I must do it—in all things. That is Originality. Next I must diligently take counsel of other men, and listen to them with absolute openness of mind. And now, having gathered in all possible data, I must next fall back upon my own self, in perfect absolutism ; or call it individualism if you like—in perfect individualism I must fall back. Perfect I say, that is, in a spirit as absolute as though no man but me had ever thought a thought ;—and I must decide—decide my doctrine, decide what is real, divine experience. Whoso flinches at that point of absolutism, waives his indefeasible right, and smirches his own majesty. I tell you there is no manhood that does not begin just there. Surrender there, and you have opened the way to every conceivable self-surrender and worthlessness, both moral and intellectual. I know the risks of Individualism, and what a force of disintegration it often is ; social life is not possible, the state, church and family are not possible, history as an organized development cannot be, and civilization itself in its highest forms must die, where the Ego is pushed as some would push it. But I know, also, that where men cease to do their own thinking and make their own decisions in the manner and under the conditions just explained, there are no longer any men, and the various social organisms are not worth keeping up. Their constituent units have dissolved into imbecility, and society is like a rotten-timbered ship.

It is much asserted now-a-days, that the spiritual Ego is not much of a thing anyway. In the first place it is not spiritual, but



material. In the next place, it is not self-directing and free, but is the slave of irresistible conditions, its environment, and all that. In the third place, of course this Ego is puffed out at death into eternal non-entity.

And now what are the sure barriers against this flood of materialistic philosophizing? The first barrier is a supernatural religious experience in millions of men, and the glorious self-consciousness that comes of it. A man regenerate, and full of regenerate experiences, always believes in his own spiritual existence, his own freedom of will and his own eternal perpetuity. And he just as much believes—and cannot help it—in a personal God. Those three faiths, hang together, logically and in life, and the more regenerations there are on earth, the less materialism there is.

That is the first barrier, and the greatest.

But close to that, is that resolute Individualism, of which I was speaking—that manful assertion of the Ego, which is involved in private judgment. If I think for myself, if I produce my own thoughts, if I settle my own principles, if I make my own discoveries, and if, even when I consult other people, and genially consider their dicta, I come back at last to the plain ground of my own kingdom, and make up my affirmative, the whole thing is so intensely self-asserting and so amplifies and classifies my self-consciousness, that I cannot in the least endure this modern scientific attempt to minimize the inner Me, and woodenize it, and make it a two-penny item in the inevitable grind of mechanical cause and effect.

Possibly the point I make here will seem to some speculative, rather than practical, but I believe that the true way to resist absorption into the creation, as a part of its dead machinery, is to magnify the personal interior man, practically, first by filling it with the life of God through Jesus Christ, and then by original energizing in the form of truth-searchings, and in the form of independent judgments.

And if I might turn aside a little here, I could speak of individualism as indispensable to civil liberty, and as the only foundation of a masculine and powerful literature. But, I was praising originality in the preacher, and to that I return and once more announce to you, that originality in our ministers secures a many-sided consideration of all subjects—and nothing else will secure it. It is a peculiarity of our subjects that they are many-sided ; and the heavi-



est pull that I have, I find, is to get on to all sides, by the help of all sorts of men. Left to myself, and following the impulses of my own constitution, I select certain aspects of the Christian Religion, in front of them sit down, and there enjoy myself forever. But along comes Mr. John Calvin, and invites me to take a turn with him, He has numbers of things he wants to show me. "Your position is good enough so far as it goes," he says; "God is love and the will of man is free enough to make him responsible, but God is justice. too, and God foreordicates in the most impressive manner, and I want you to walk all around that, and mortise that into your theological system, and let your system have the advantage of it; and you too."

But, by the time John Calvin is through with me, Horace Bushnell wants him. He has discovered some things, he thinks. And before they have finished with each other, Huxley, Tyndall, and Herbert Spencer, are waiting for them both. Calvin and Bushnell with all their divergency, one from the other, are agreed that Christianity is a supernatural system from first to last, and those three naturalistic gentlemen just named have come to expound the side of Law, to them, and to show that the law-system of God has never been breached in one instance. All religions are a natural development, they say, Jesus of Nazareth was a product of his race and his circumstances:—a splendid product confessedly, so that unreflective, unscientific, and wonder-mongering men and generations, naturally enough got him deified, and encompassed his earthly way with marvels, heaven-descended and miraculous.

Christianity, (these gentlemen go on,) Christianity has been exhibited by theologians as a system so without parallel in other religions, and in Natural Religion, that it seems a kind of strange work of God, an eccentricity, an irruption; whereas, in truth, Christianity is an orderly factor, and an organic factor, in God's vast framework of things, and all it needs is time and study, to show its many affiliations with all the great Faiths of the world. That is their talk, and the two theologians listen to it, and get a new sense of the law-side of things, and they begin to wonder—many theologians do at any rate, whether, in preaching the supernatural and the miraculous, we have not been too prone to show the irruptive and abnormal element in it, rather than its large normalism. A miracle is a startling and unclassifiable thing, certainly, on its hither side; but if it be looked at on its transcendental side also, may it not be

found to be part and parcel of a thoroughly-established, universal, undeviating orderliness ; so that while a miracle, when it comes into sight on the earth-side, is very sensational in its rupture of the customary flow of things, it is even more imposing as a law-abiding unit in that totality of created things of which one hemisphere is the natural, and the other the supernatural. When the supernatural plunges into the natural there is a commotion and the dust flies, and we say God has started up suddenly to do by direct fiat, what would not have been done had he kept his repose, and permitted his created laws to move on ; but he has not started up probably ; the scientists are right ; his laws are moving on and it was they that made this plunge, and this dust.

I have drawn out this illustration rather fully, because it does illustrate my idea that many minds working independently contribute to the unfolding of truth in all its phases. My joyful conviction is that the perilous rationalism in the field of natural science, which is one of the most obvious and most striking features of the intellectual life of the present time, will do forty times more good than hurt in the expansion and enrichment of our conception of Christianity. And it will do it in two ways. It will secure a just attention to aspects of truth which have been too much retired ; and it will cause such a hard-headed, and scholarly re-examination of truths which have not been retired, but have been held prominent, and made to be the Malakoff and Redan of the Christian position, that they will be reconfirmed with shoutings.

Nature is as truly a revelation of God as the Bible is. Nature is an immense theological statement—and every attribute of God is found in that statement, but some attributes more distinctly than others. Those distinct attributes the unbelieving naturalists are bringing out—though they do not intend it, for they take little stock in the idea of a personal God—they are doing good theologizing for all the rest of us :—and if our theology has confined itself too much to a Book (as I suppose it has,) the labors of these bright gentlemen will surely supplement our deficiency.

And then as to the broader establishment of old truths by the laborious gainsayings of these men, take this example :—they say that Jesus was a purely natural result ; given the Jewish race, the Jewish land, the Jewish history, Mary the Virgin, Nazareth, a few simple this-world things like that, and the great Nazarene is fully accounted for. So then we are all invited to study, exhaustively,

those this-world things ; and the more we do it, the more it stands out as never before that Jesus came from out of the sky in the main, and could not have been born of Palestine only.

In like manner, various disparaging assertions touching the origin of the Bible, and touching numbers of sacred things, have led to such a sifting of the same as was never known ; and continually the result is, that our Religion, in all its substantials, is gloriously vindicating itself.

And if we come to the controversies among the men of faith, as to the inspiration of the Bible, and the Passion of the Lord Jesus, and the eternal lot of sinners and all the rest ; these controversies have sprung up because our men are intellectually independent and original—when they put their eyes on a thing, it is their own eyes that they put on, and that thing therefore is seen in all sorts of possible ways, and some impossible ones ; but no matter—what Edwards does not see, Wesley will, and what Wesley does not, Edwards will. Some sensitive man does not cordialize with Calvin's view of God's penalties. That is his personal specialty ; to be sensitive. Whether it was that his mother was the woman she was, or that he happened to fall under special forces of training, I do not know ; but there he is all in a quiver against the Calvinistic theology at that point. But he is a good man, and a man of mind and scholarship ; he begins certain hypothetical reasonings on the old doctrine, to see if he cannot get it into some sort of sufferable shape ; and perhaps not tear the heart out of it, either. Now, what I say is, that that man, moving freely and having no doubt of his right to be independent, will be likely to hammer out some statements that even Calvin will be willing to hear. In his horror of the thought that God should come out against his finally impenitent creatures, in objective strokes eternally laid on, he will carefully unfold a man's Hell from his own interior, and show him as forever in the grasp of intellectual laws already well known. And what other ameliorations defensible or indefensible he will surmise, we cannot tell ; but it is good to have just that man—that kind-hearted (perhaps over-kind hearted and over-shrinking,) well-furnished, determined man, tugging with all his might at just that point. Multiply these indefatigable explorers by thousands, and you see what is seen in newly-discovered gold lands ; every rod of the theological landscape is numerously searched, and every ounce of its dirt, for a thousand miles, is microscopically sifted in some gold-searcher's pan. And that is

what we want. Our theology will be a whole orchestra, when all its tones are discovered, instead of a squeak here and a squeak there of some sectarian view, or some provincialism or some passing aberration of the century.

I have spoken in praise of originality, in a pretty affirmative way, you have noticed, but I have no objection to slip in a touch of prudence here at the end.

Egotism and vaporing, and a despising of authorities in the intellectual and religious world, is a thing easy to fall into when your soul gets full of the doctrine of originality which I have preached here to-day ; and self-assertion, and an opinionated air, and a bragging way of exhibiting one's originality, is not beautiful either in young men or in old ones—therefore consider a moment.

If you pursue originality for its own sake, or because it feels good to be original—or if you pursue it for the sake of a sensation, among the people, and because that feels good ; then you are clean out of the way, and your originality is disgusting. It seems to me I should not pursue originality at all. There are many things that are good to have but you must not pursue them. You must go straight along about your business, and let them come of themselves, if they want to, just as right-minded maidens get their lovers. But what is the business that you are to go straight along about, and in which originality may incidentally come to you ? I might give several answers to that. If you are in passionate pursuit of the truth, all strutting as of originality will be taken out of you. Or if you have a passion to do good to the congregation to whom you preach, that will do it. Can I think of my sermon in a conceited way when my whole heart is out in the assembly before me ? As well could the runner in the games think of his gait, or the swordsman in the duel delight in the glitter of his sword. My Brethren, God puts us, his ministers, in a very testful position. On the one hand, we must make sermons ; we must make good sermons, we must ram into them tons of stock, we must spend days on each one, and work over it in such a concentrated and devoted way that, when at last it is finished and the agony is over, we cannot help feeling a mother-like self-satisfaction in it ; and then when we go into the pulpit, we must deliver it decently, and give enough attention to our ourselves to secure that end ; and yet, on the other hand, we just as much must keep clear of self-consciousness, and a loving sense of our own discourse, if we are to please God and bless the people.

There we are. And the curse of the preaching of many of us is, that we have not the strength to do those two contrary things, and do not go to God sufficiently to be led out by him into the great motives and enthusiasm in which self is swallowed up ; the enthusiasm for Truth, and the enthusiasm for Humanity. You see your peril, Brethren, and you see your remedy. Sermon-making is in order to salvation. Sermons are instruments, not ends. "A good sermon is a sermon that is good for something," as I once heard an old minister remark.

And Originality is for use. You want to be original because that is God's method for the intellect, because thus you are a discoverer of truth, because thus your mind is made prolific, because thus you are saved from plagiarism whether formal or virtual, because thus you do your part towards the eventual exhibition of Christian truth in its many-sided entirety ; because thus you are a real witness for God, because thus you continually increase your personal mass and momentum ; and because all these particulars bear on the glory of God, and the welfare of man.

Some would say, it is well enough for great men to be independent and original thinkers, and to move before the world in that gait—their size saves them from being ridiculous—a sort of imperialism is becoming to them, and people put up with it ; but for little men and young men to assume to be original, and courageously do their own thinking, is rather intolerable. It can be made intolerable, but it is as possible for a small mind to work by the method of originality as for a large one, else I should not be delivering this lecture ; for more than half of the ministerial minds are smallish. Moreover, a little man has his duty to his own mind, and to his congregation, as much as anybody has. You might say :—yonder bit of a man has no moral obligation because of his lack of size ; but he has. And in like manner, yonder undergrown intellect must take good care to think rightly—not in servile dependence on strong men, but originally—and if he does, his intellectual forth-puttings, while they will not be stupendous or over-numerous, will be always fresh and have a sound of authority.

But in making them our own the point of strain, as I said, is, to keep ourselves perfectly modest, and perfectly receptive of the light of other minds. Absolutely firm on the one hand, and absolutely genial and inoffensive on the other. Striving to be firm, we may seem conceited, dogmatic, and repellant. Striving to preserve



our intellectual integrity, and the courage of our opinions, in the stress of the world's innumerable yea and nay, we may get accused of intellectual pride and forwardness, and of many things ; especially if we are young.

Well, let us watch and pray, and do the best we can.

I look back with amusement, now, to the intellectual self-confidence with which I left this Seminary after Dr. Nathaniel Taylor had spent a couple of years or so getting me on to my own legs ; and whereinsoever I stood a little more than perpendicular, I take it back of course, but I bless the memory of that very affirmative, self-centred, and undoubting old man notwithstanding. He knew in whom he had believed, and why he had believed, and he made us all feel that truth is discoverable, and that we could discover it, every man of us, and that we did not need to be badgered out of it by the noise of gainsayers ; and that a man's a man, in theology as in some other things ; and that it is better to go to the judgment after a life-time of manful strugglings with the truth albeit with some errors, than to go there with whatever amount of truth held in mere languid receptivity. And he was right.



## IMAGINATION IN MINISTERS.

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I am here to day to make a plea for Imagination in Ministers considered as Theologians.

I do not know whether any previous lecturer has made a whole speech on that faculty or not. Some of the lecturers have had the faculty themselves, in great size, but perhaps they would be afraid to encourage people generally to have it. I heard so considerable and judicious a man as the late Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes, Pastor for a life time of the First Church in Hartford, Connecticut, give an account of his high-handed proceedings, in the days of his youth, against imagination in his own mind. He found, he said, that he was pretty strong and exuberant in that trait, and that his sermons were showing it. So by and by, when traveling alone and thoughtful in his carriage all the way from Hartford to New Haven, he improved the occasion for a solemn deliberation on the question:—"how can I do the most good in my life time, preaching imaginatively as now, or otherwise." I need not say to those who knew him, which way that debate went, nor with what success he enforced on himself his resolution then made, to extirpate that perilous endowment of his.

Dr. Hawes stands for a multitude. They are afraid of imagination. And they have good reasons for it. I am afraid of it. I am afraid of every power of the mind. I am afraid of mind—and body too. All things have their risks and perversions. And I had thought that I would say to you here, to-day, just where the danger comes in, as respects imagination in the preacher. I could tell you all about it; but I believe that the dry vision, and the one-eyed vision, the literalism and the non-creative habit of the un-

imaginative men has cursed theology and the pulpit even more than the sky-flying and moonshine of the imaginationists.

But I cease from comparisons, and from all preliminaries, and proceed directly to illustrate the wholesome function of this great power of man in the minister considered as a theologian—or a man theologizing. And under that head I notice :

First. That, the imaginative man—and he only—is able to handle, and draw out, biblical doctrines historically—to take it, that is, in its entire historical setting. For the word of God on theology is not an absolute utterance straight down from the skies, and direct from his lips, but it comes to us very circuitously through human lips, and many human lips, and through all sorts of human and earthly intermediates ; and a full-visioned and creative grasp of those numerous intermediates is an essential part of good theologizing. When God would make himself known in his fullness, he chose to be incarnated in the person of his eternal Son ; that pre-existent and infinite personage took upon himself the conditions of time and sense ; he dropped into an order of things historically prepared for him by a long and laborious process, he became a vital factor in that order of things, he accepted all the relations prepared to his hand, spoke in a certain language for example, was of a certain country, dwelt on a certain spot, in a certain home, was nursed and cultured in a certain religion,—and, in short, made his whole manifestation on earth a relational and conditional one, so that he cannot be fully understood in the least word he spoke, or the least act he performed, except that he is interpreted by those conditions, or relations in which he stood. We must resurrect his era ; not only in its outlines, but in all its essentials. We must resurrect Judea, as it then was. And when we get hold of Judea to do that, we shall find that Judea intertangled with other nationalities, so that we have undertaken, in fact, a kind of general resurrection. And if Judea intertwined with contemporary peoples, so it did, O ! how wonderfully, with the peopled and providential past ; so that to possess ourselves of Jesus of Nazareth, as he actually and totally was, a time-man and historical phenomenon, we need the magnificent clear vision and creativeness of the imaginative faculty, as these modern times (to their praise be it said) are finding out.

Historical imagination ! an indispensable first thing in the theologian.

But some one in his heart may say to me here :—" Cannot any

man of good sense and decent memory, without a grain of imagination, by diligent study of any past—as the past, for instance, in which Jesus organically stood—re-construct that past, and have it live before him in its full-toned actuality, so that any one of the many forces and personages of which it is made up shall be judged by him in a valid way. Is it not claiming too much for the imagination to say that it only is able to draw out the theology of the Scripture, and the theology of the Christian ages, in a strictly historical spirit and method ! ”

In answering this question, I must make a little analysis of that mental power which we call imagination. I will not undertake a complete definition, but I will point out some of the marks by which it may be known. For all the purposes of this present discourse, imagination may be divided into imagination recollective, and imagination creative. Imagination recollective, places before the mind things absent or past which we have personally seen, or which have been brought to our knowledge by hearsay and study. Imagination creative, takes those re-produced absent or past things, and out of their many elements makes new combinations ; as when a painter puts into his landscape not any one natural scene, but particulars and parts of many scenes with which he is familiar. As regards the historical construction of theology, whereof I have been speaking, imagination recollective figures there ; that to begin with ; and if I am asked,—how does imagination recollective differ from memory, and does it differ at all,—I reply, only in this, that it presents to the mind things absent or foregone in a vivid way, and after the manner of literal vision. Things merely recollected seem distant and cold, and to that extent void of result ; things imaginatively recollected seem near, warm, vital, and inspiring. A recollective theologian, by virtue of an enormous gift of memory, may have an encyclopedic hold on the theologic past, but he holds the past as Encyclopedias are apt to, in a colorless way, and with no special human interest. The imaginative theologian moves among those by-gones, all and utterly alive, and visional,—as much so as though he had been personally among them, and of them, originally. He cannot see that a man, or a deed, or a nation, or a social process, or a system of thought two thousand years away, is any less actual or thrilling than the same thing in these days. When some one disparaged Plato in the presence of Dr. Arnold, Arnold's lip quivered with grief. A memoriter man could not have

been moistened in that way, by whatever outrage against all conceivable Platos. He would be abundantly acquainted with them, the Platos, of course, but as frigid historical entities, and not in any flesh and blood warmth and nearness.

A few years ago, accidentally, it was found that underneath old St. Clements in Rome—itsself one of the most antique of churches—was another St. Clements, which had been buried and unknown for over a thousand years. When I was there, the portico and nave of that edifice had been dug out, and Father Mullooly, of the Dominican Monastery near by, conducted a party of us through it, with explanations. As we passed in he called our attention to the marble threshold, half-worn out by the passage of countless feet in the long-gone times, and said :—"there are a good many foot-prints on that stone ;"—and to me, instantly, those living generations were there again, and I felt the mysterious pathos of human life in their persons as deeply and emotionally as I could in any human company of to-day. That sentence of Mullooly's was coined in the imagination—distinctly. It was not memory. It was not his intellect grasping a fact. It was feeling warmed up to vision. It was imagination, one of whose distinctions is that it is always suffused with sensibility :—it was imagination revivifying triumphantly those dead and shadowy great multitudes by a single unconscious master-stroke—such as are easy to that imperial faculty.

And Father Mullooly by this little touch, classed himself right in with Shakespeare, in many a passage of his plays. It required precisely the same mental qualities to re-people that old Nave, and tie a thousand human years to that foot-worn marble, that it did to make Hamlet reclothe the bare, dead skull of Yorick which the grave-digger had thrown out, and which Hamlet held in his hands, saying : "Alas poor Yorick ! I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy ; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times. \* \* Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now?—your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar." Is Hamlet remembering there? Anybody could do that. Perhaps Yorick's dog could. But the dog could not thus re-enflesh that skull ; re-create those living lips, and make them merry again ; and give poor Yorick a live and actual visit to the earth once more.

That was imagination ; in one of her minute works to be sure ;

only manipulating a skull ; but herself entirely, nevertheless—her intuitive and total vision, her deep feeling, her weird mastery of materials. It required only a glimpse of her stately gait to reveal Juno, only his perfect O to reveal Giotto, only the one tone " Mary," to reveal to the Magdalen the risen Jesus ; and in like manner, one slightest word may suddenly disclose a royal imagination in its entire characteristic power.

But, to get back to theology once more, I want to say—what I have already slipped along into—that when imagination recollective has done her whole work in any given case—as in the reproduction of Jesus of Nazareth, or of the Christian theology—and has put the past before the mind with great clearness, it has in fact passed on into imagination creative. We may have a clear knowledge of the constituent elements of an era ; those elements may stand before us in the most vivid and visional reality ; but if we stop there, we are not in full possession of that era. We are right where the painter is when he has assembled the several views, and snatches of color and rude studies, out of which he will make his landscape. I spoke of imagination creative as that by which we combine things recollected in such shapes as they never had before ; and that was a true description. But I must say now, it is likewise a creative act, to take the contents of an historical era for example, the hundred details which you have gathered in their separate literality, and organize them into a conception of that past as it stood when on the stage here, an organized and living unity. Am I making myself as clear at this point as I would like ? It were possible to assemble the elemental contents of a rose. There they are as plain as day. But you are not within a hundred thousand miles of a rose. Can you organize your elements ? Can you get them together and make them grow and flush, and be fragrant, and be, in fact, a rose ? No—only a Creator can do that.

Well, call the era of our Lord a rose. I, a memoriter historian, have heaped together for myself that miscellany of information touching that era, which is the era, in its atomic form. And there I am. I have imagination enough to look at those accumulated atoms in a pretty living and warm way. They are invisible, but I see them. They are long-past things but I get them near. And I brood them with quite a fructification of interest. But I have not my era yet. This sand-heap of atoms of mine is not that era as it was to the people who took part therein. They did not dwell



much on atomics when they were laughing and crying, loving and hating, and tugging in the thousand-fold thrill of their living-time. What I want is, that time with its thrills, flushes and throbs, a corporate unit of life ; and to get that I must be a Creator. I must have creative imagination. That final act of the mind by which the era—that inert Adam—is made a living soul, is beyond all analysis, I presume ; as much so as God's act when he made the first man. And I do not know whether any serviceable rules can be given for the creation of that creative faculty. I should not wonder if a man must be born to it. But if it so happens that he is born to it, then he can cultivate it, or kill it (as Dr. Hawes killed his). My notion is that he had better cultivate it—and I am using this lecture to show the splendid uses of the faculty, in order that I may make you feel that you had all better cultivate whatso of it you may have. It is a high-blood steed with a fearful amount of vigor and possible rampancy, but so much the better if only you once get it harnessed and at work. A horse might be so lumbering and sleepy as not to be worth harnessing. In theology we do not want any such faculties as that.

But dwell a moment longer on imagination creative. Perhaps there lingers in your mind a doubt whether the living reconstruction of an era after the manner just described is a creative act—is it not rather a purely formulative act. Well, you would not call it a formulative act merely if a painter worked up a dozen different scenes into one original scene. That would certainly be creative. He has made something never before seen, or thought of. But I cannot see that his work is any more truly creative than is the painter's who throws upon his canvas any one view in nature provided he gives the view in its entire and profound significance. As a matter of fact, the greatest landscapes the genius of man ever produced, are, as a rule, copies of single actual scenes—their greatness consisting in this : that they have made those scenes the medium of all expression, whether moral, spiritual, or esthetic, that can be thrown into them. And when I read the great Poets of Nature I find the same thing. By their profound and phenomenal sensibility they perceive nature's utmost possible meaning, and tell it. That is all, generally. Coleridge looks up to Mt. Blanc, with a vision most open-eyed and sympathetic, and veraciously relates what he sees. Of course, the poem is an eminently subjective one, because in it he has imputed to the

mountain many feelings of his own ; but the mountain is capable of having those feelings put into it ; in other words, the mountain in its various aspects, movements, and manifestations, is a natural vehicle of expression for those human feelings, and may be said to have been created unto that end ; and poetry reaches its highest expression when the spirit of man and the spirit of the universe thus completely flow together. When Coleridge, Wordsworth, or whoever, reaches that synthesis of those two, and that final ecstasy, the creative imagination has done a work than which there is none greater ;—and yet the work is simply interpretative ;—it is not the making of something out of nothing, neither is it the combining of forty familiar somethings into a brand-new result.

So I like to insist that when the imagination of man is engaged in the work of historical reconstruction, making the dead past live again, and departed personages revisit the earth, and exhumed skulls put on the red and rose of life, she is operating in her supreme, creative, function, and is wonderful beyond all words. The annalist does not know much about this. The mechanical historian does not. Many a theologian does not. Some teachers of theology do not. Some teachers of church history do not. History is intensely vital ; and moves on by a vital advance, and addresses itself to the imagination as much as it does to the reason—and in fact the reason is not able ever to be thoroughly reasonable until she has taken into herself the warmth, vivacity, and sudden-flashing intuitiveness of that other great faculty. It has been thought that in the cold fields of science only reason and the remorseless exactitudes of logic have place ; but, the truth is, poetry is not more indebted to imagination than science is. The brilliant guesses of the sons of science, which, used first as working hypotheses, have at last gone in among the eternal substructures of knowledge, were the unreasoning outsprings of the imagination, and proved themselves more than guesses because of the large and luminous sanity which is native to that faculty, and because of its constitutional hunger for the real and the true. And as to exactitudes, while the reason has hers, the imagination has hers—the only difference between them being this, that the exactitudes of the reason are formal, while the exactitudes of the imagination reach back to the spirit of things, and are the more profoundly exact on that very account. This point, however, will get some illustration when I come to the third head of this address.

My second head runs thus :

The man of imagination, and he alone, inclines to see doctrines in their comparative importance. It is in this as in picture-making. In order to picturesque effects, a painter must have an eye to light and shade, and proportion, and perspective, and the manifold relativities. The cow in his landscape must have her place, and the castle must have its place, and the strong wind in the trees must have its place, and the over-flying scurry of clouds, and the human persons, and the river winding out into the dim and unsearchable distance, must all have their thoroughly discriminated position and value, otherwise we are treated, not to a picture but to an outspread of exaggeration, confusion and nonsense. Some men paint in that way considerably. A Chinese man might, I fancy. His landscape is just a flat surface of unassorted magnitudes. It has no maxima and minima, but an insufferable array and pressure of maxima. So in theology. It is possible to have such a solemn sense of the value of doctrines as to make them all infinite, and defend them all therefore with the same earnestness ; and insist that they shall all go into the creeds, and all be presented in the pulpit, in the very foreground of discourse ; that there shall not be any background in theology, in fact—for what do we want of a background, when we have nothing to put into it, no doctrines, that is, that deserve to be subordinated by being located in that partial retirement.

Now, my Brethren, all this flat-surface work comes of unimaginative minds. I knew an able preacher once who was unto his people, pretty soon, wherever he went, exactly as though he were not able, because his entire presentation of himself and his topic was a piece of flat-surface work. His solemn voice had no light and shade in it. It was just solemn. Neither had his delivery light and shade. It was one prolonged and unvarying earnestness. His diction had no light and shade in it. It was all first-class. The first sentence was as good as the next one, and the next, and the next, clear through ; the last being an unexceptionable duplicate of all that went before. If that Homer could only have nodded sometimes ! But he didn't. If he could have slackened his seriousness, or his diction, or his holy voice, or his determination to do good—if some gentle cloud of humor could have precipitated its dewiness upon his discourse at points ; if some infirmity of colloquialism could have overtaken him ; if the grand sum-total of his emphasis could have been distributed less evenly ; sometimes in

cumulations and sometimes in hollows, just as the seas, abhorring flatness and endless levels, climb up in great tides and storm-lifts, and then sink back and consent to be tame a little, while they get breath for another run—why ! he would have been far and away more effective. Imagination is limber, and variable, because it sees all things relatively, according to the laws of the picturesque ; it delights in cows, castles, clouds, winding rivers and human beings ; and in universal geniality it is willing to have them all powerfully painted ; but it knows the difference between a cow and a man, and proposes to have them painted accordingly—and when imagination goes into theology, she knows the difference between those doctrines that are of the essence of Christianity and salvation, and those that are not ; and between the spirit of a doctrine and the form. But this will come out more evidently under the next division of my subject.

My third head, then, is that imagination is necessary in order to the interpretation of the imaginative parts of the Bible, and a clear hold on the realities that lie back of its oftentimes highly poetic vocabulary.

To illustrate. How often in that Book is God spoken of as angry and raging, as revengeful, as impatient, as punctilious and easily affronted, as blood-thirsty, as treasuring up a personal insult for many generations, and as being many things a man certainly never ought to be. And the prose man—the unmitigated prose man—thinks there must be some element of literality in this,—that God has in his mind, something like those several inclemencies. But the poetic theologian knows that these mighty adjectives are but the tumultuation of the imagination, piling up her sensational images—to express something to be sure ; something, but, of a truth, not this—that God actually has in his feeling the literal counterparts of those awful human terms. God is infinitely genial. God is uniformly and eternally genial. God never had a first flutter of impatience. God never stands on his dignity and resents insults. God never in one instance laid an affront away in his memory and watched for an opportunity to get in a killing return-stroke. And how could his creatures survive another minute if he were such a terrific being as that. But, in the way God enforces law throughout his dominions, we have a state of things as though all those adjectives about him were true words. When we transgress law we smart for it, and it hurts us and frightens us, as though back of the law were some great personal anger. When the misdoings of some

ancestor of mine report themselves in my diseased body, it is as though God had remembered those misdoings of his back there, and now had a chance to gratify his revenge. When I resist the Holy Spirit, and therefore quite lose that Spirit, it is as though God would not endure an insult, had lost his patience, had grown sullen towards me, and had left me—perhaps forever. The hither-side of these realities is such as to justify those lively and fierce adjectives concerning God which I have quoted from the Scriptures ; and those adjectives become infelicitous and intolerable only when innocent literalists get hold of them, and forgetting the essentially figurative character of all language when applied to supersensible objects, proceed to practically demonize the Divine Being by thinking of him as actually living up to the whole import of those discreditable descriptives. And it seems particularly curious that they should thus literalize those descriptives, because the Bible has thrown in a whole other class of descriptives which talk in a way precisely opposite to those first ones, and seem to be striving with all their might to save God's honor from the aforesaid imputations of literalism. The reason of man is a poor broken thing but there is enough left of it to see that when the Scriptures set forth God as infinitely amiable, and also set him forth as a being of rage, resentment, touchiness, implacability, and the like, both of those pictures cannot be literally true. So the honest, and sturdy old Bible, fairly forces us into figurative renderings, if only we have enough of imagination, with its elasticity, to be forced. Back of these strong, antithetic terms in regard to God, there is some sort of nature in him which they are both trying to describe, and in which they are both harmonized. Some fumbling, in so great a matter, is pardonable—inevitable at any rate, considering what lame faculties men have—but it is not pardonable to select those eminently anthropomorphic images, hate, vengeance and the rest, and declare them literal and no images ; and then fall upon the blander and sweeter words, love, patience, tenderness, mercy, long-sufferance and forgiveness, and condemn them to be images, with no great and comfortable reality behind them. Only just let us have imagination in this business, and we are all right. We can find our way to a fatherly and dear God, who, like all fathers, does many a thing that hurts, because his heart is so unfathomably tender that he cannot do otherwise.

Well, the non-imaginative theology, after it has got its Deity of wrath, and other traits germane to wrath, proceeds to find in the



Bible a correlative doctrine of atonement, and the gist of the mediation of Jesus is made to be its placation of just that Being. None of us want to deny a propitiary element in the work of Christ ; the manifold language of propitiation found in Holy Writ is good and precious language ; it is not language misused, any more than all those wrath-terms are, on which we have dwelt ; it is language designed to point us to some sort of reality in the nature, and in the administration of God. What that reality is, I might undertake to say if there were time for it, but this I am determined to say (and would if it took me a month) : namely, that the passion of the Lord was not exacted in any spirit of hate, or blood-thirstiness, or inappeasable hunger for penalty, or irritability as of offended dignity ; and if that passion of the Redeemer had a look as though it were thus demanded, or if any language of the Bible has that look, it is because the passion and the language alike, are images, or terms of imagination ; and what the eternal facts are to which they would direct our attention, we must discover by accumulating all heaven-given terms, types, and acted tragedies, and sifting them down to that ultimate and sufficiently awful real thing in God, wherein they all terminate and agree. A piece of work in which imagination has a principal part.

But, if a Deity of rages and terrors, implies, and leads on to, an inadmissible doctrine of atonement, so also does it lead on to an inadmissible doctrine of decrees—election and reprobation—and an inadmissible doctrine of Hell, and to a whole system of inadmissibles ; which inadmissibles I do not mention as wishing to combat them. I care nothing for that to-day, except as in illustration of what theology may come to when it is wrought out without the limberness, largeness, insight, geniality and intuitive vigor of the imagination. Hell is bad enough in its reality, without its being gloomed additionally by the over-hanging presence and the glee of a Deity such as has been secured by the petrification of the live images in such words as anger, and the rest. What men suffer in hell, here and hereafter, is so hard to bear, and is so full of terror, that, taken in its simple first-aspect, it makes one think of a terribly offended, and terribly strong-willed, law-giver ; and this natural first-thought is worked up in the Scriptural imageries of Hell. Then again as to decrees—it is a fact that a certain part of the human race are saved, and a certain part are not. There stands that fact, overshadowing all life ; mysterious and sorrowful to the

last degree. The universe of God, man included, is so constituted, and the government of God is so administered, that that stupendous and pitiful result is incessantly coming out,—I was going to say, is incessantly secured, as though there might be some intention in it, and a theology has been found that has the courage to say there is intention in it. Well, the whole thing is so terrific, and works on so as with the sureness of fate and purpose, that the Bible writers, who always freely use the language of appearance, have spoken of God as electing some and cutting off others in an exceedingly willful and irresistible sovereignty; at least, plenty of the expressions used by them are such as have led many to say:—God is that kind of a being, and does such things. And this notion of his fateful sovereignty in the moral field, is able to get a good show of support from his indivertible, awful, straightforwardness in the field of natural law. Imagination says: As Jesus sobbed over doomed Jerusalem, so it must be God tenderly reluctates from all hard dooms in the creation; and these ten thousand shows of hardness in him, and these Scriptural words of hardness, do not mean hardness, except as love itself is compelled to be very firm sometimes in order to be really love, and compass its loving ends, and make all worlds glad.

I do not forget that imagination, in her free way of interpretation may smooth down some fearful facts too much, sometimes; taking the love-words of the Bible too literally and unqualifiedly, and subjecting the words of wrath, fear and doom to an unjustifiable disembowelment; as though, being images evidently, and disagreeable ones, too, they had no rights, as message-bearers to men. That has often been done; I confess it. But what I aim to bring out is, that the whole vocabulary of divine revelation, as regards things spiritual and transcendental, is imaginative, and must be imaginatively received. Without imagination, theology is always wrong—with imagination, theology may be right, (approximately), and often is. When your terms of revelation are images, and when as being images they are gloriously contrary one to the other, on the face of them, (as it is their right to be, it being of the genius and essence of language that they should be, and as they must be if they would communicate the facts of God in their largeness), then it is only the image-making faculty in man that can take those terms, and get back to their ground of unity in the supersensible fact or facts which they are all striving to set forth; just as in a law-

case, when a hundred witnesses testify, each speaking from his own standpoint, it needs a mind of some flexibility, and some experience of contraries, to find the undoubted kernel of things under that mass of information and misinformation:

My Brethren, I have not half unfolded the use of the imagination in Biblical interpretation.

You are reading your Scriptural Lesson in your pulpit; no matter what it is, but I will suppose it is Jesus at Jacob's well conversing with the Samaritan woman. Take that, out of scores. Well, read it with your imagination. You see the scene:—see it, I say, as though you were there. The spot, the surrounding landscape, the appearance of the well, the face, form and attitude of Jesus, and of the woman, the tone of Jesus when he speaks, calm, kind, communicative and deep; the voice of the woman replying, her changing face as the Master leads her on, her curiosity, her wonder, her rising earnestness, her longing, her vague grasp of his spiritual profundities—the whole picture, considered as a picture,—you using all you ever learned of the topography of that region, and all you ever learned about Samaritans, and all your study of Jesus, using all to make that picture complete, and vivid to your mind; read the lesson thus, and it will not be historical but present, not abstract teaching but the teaching of life, not Jesus remembered and read about, but Jesus. O! it is wonderful, how real, and interesting, such passages are sometimes. I have often been so filled by them that I could hardly read at all. My conviction of the divinity of the Scriptures has been gained by these realistic touches, these imaginative reproductions of scenes and conversations in Jesus' life, more, I think, than in any other way. I shall never be able to describe the impression I have sometimes received of the depth, tenderness, and grandeur of Christ as a spiritual teacher, and a more than man, when I have been simply reading and listening to him in his frequent dialogues with the people he happened to meet.

I heard a Lecture once from a certain man, on his first visit to Europe, from which he had just returned. He was a professional elocutionist, and he dwelt considerably on the public speakers of England, and imitated them. And among the rest, he recited a vain-glorious temperance speech which he heard at a mass meeting in Exeter Hall, London. And he did it so well, and I listened in so much exercise of imagination, that I saw the whole situation as plainly as though I had been there. What the lecturer omitted, I

furnished. I even saw the clothes the temperance orator wore ; noticed how they fitted him, and of what fabric they were made. That, and numbers of other things, I furnished, because my imagination was stirred, and I instinctively sought a full picture. And the result was this ; two or three years after, I told a circle of people that I attended a mass temperance meeting in Exeter Hall ; that I there heard a certain man speak, and that he said this and that, which I went on to recite precisely as I had received it from the lecturer. I sincerely told that lie, in complete forgetfulness at the time, that I did not myself hear the speech but had only been told of it. I had been in England, and in Exeter Hall, and that assisted me to imagine the situation, I suppose, but the point I am after is, that the imagination has an almost unlimited capacity to see things—absent things—historic things—faces that disappeared long ago—paintings, buildings, natural views,—vanished sunsets,—death scenes,—Jesus at the well,—Jesus at the grave of Lazarus,—Jesus at his last Passover in Jerusalem that moon-lighted night eighteen centuries ago. I do not know that it is best to have your imagination make pictures so good that after a little you cannot remember whether they may not be realities you have once seen rather than the weird work of the mind ; but I think I had rather be carried to that extreme occasionally, and tell some lies about Exeter Hall orators than to hear things, and read history, and pass through life with no visional energy, and reproductive enthusiasm, whatever. When I read that Judaism and Christianity are highly elaborated correlates, and am shown point by point the amazing details of that correlation, I want at last to gather up that complex thing, Judaism, as in one vast unit before my mind, and that other complex, Christianity ; and play them off against each other back there in history as in a visible back and forth. When I read that we all rose from the dead in the rising of Jesus, I get my best impression of it, by picturing it—a magnificent scene. When I read of the Judgment, let it be a scene to me. So Heaven,—so Hell,—so the millennium,—so the intercession of Christ at God's right hand,—I do not want to hear about them, I want to see them. And in many of these things, the Bible assists us to see, and means to make us see. Witness its diversiform imagery in regard to Heaven ; a place of pastures, sweet-waters and plenties, a place of choirs and hosannas, a four-walled metropolis of solid great measurements, and of precious decorations and resplendencies, gorgeous as an oriental

dream. There are the figures in profusion, and you will do well to use them for the refreshment of your mind, and the vivification of your conception, and not decline them as sensuous, and confused, and too likely to physicalize Heaven.

Now, so much I have said on the value of the imagination in interpreting the imaginative parts of the Bible, (which include pretty much all parts).

I shall add, at present, only one thing more. Years ago, when John Bright had just made one of his massive, unflinching, reformatory speeches before the people of England, a displeased conservative Journal in London complained that he had no "moral imagination" as they called it; by which they meant, as was explained, that he had not the imagination necessary to put himself in the place of an opponent, and appreciate his views. A great omission, that, in the make-up of anybody. If some desperate work of reform is to be done,—as when Wm. Lloyd Garrison began against slavery—perhaps the man who is to do the work had better not see the other side too plainly. Horses go best with blinders. What is wanted of them is to go along, and not be getting broad views, and diversified views, to confuse their minds. So, if old school Calvinists and new school Calvinists, should sympathetically understand each other's arguments, it might weaken them both, and perhaps destroy the schools. Still, I should rather not be a reformer at all, or an effective polemic, than to come short of "moral imagination." A theologian who cannot carry himself over into another and contrary theologian's ideas, so completely as to be mitigated and temporarily weakened as it were by his plausibilities, has not a complete and well-proportioned mind, is not in the way to make discoveries, and is an unprofitable leader of the public. Of some use he is, I have admitted; just as sometimes a military leader is of special value because all he knows is, to fight the enemy immediately before him, might and main; and, if whipped, to keep on fighting as though nothing had happened; and therefore never be whipped. However, who would choose to be that kind of useful man, rather than a captain of all-including comprehension. Speaking of discoveries, the way to know Calvinism is to go there, and the way to know materialism, or dualism, or atheism, is to go there; disagreeable spots to visit, some of them, but you must go—and of all the faculties of the mind, it is literally true, that the only one able to go is imagination. You may have so much imagination,



and may stay so long on these sympathetic visits, as to be devitalized by them, and never have any settled opinions ; (you will meet such people out in the world, and they are the worst kind of affliction to the unimaginative brethren, who always know exactly what they believe, and why nothing else has the least reason to be believed)—so keep watch of yourself, in your imaginative excursions among the Isms, but make the excursions, and get to yourself the big sense and human-heartedness that come of them.

This gift to “put yourself in his place,” is quite indispensable to the preacher. Hundreds of able men just miss of success all their lives, because they cannot limber themselves to that. The point was hit very well for substance by an eminent man and speaker, whom I heard thirty years ago say :—The young preacher cries—“Be good—be good,”—the old preacher says :—“My dear friends, if you cannot be good, then be as good as you can.” Life has taught him what human nature is, and what human nature’s difficulties are. He has had some rough times getting his own self to be good, and certain parts of him are not even yet made willing. Also he has moved about among men, and tried to lift on them, and coax them to try to lift on themselves ; and therefore when he stands up in his pulpit, he is like a cannonier, who before he opened his guns had reconnoitered the position he was to bombard, so that he dropped in his shells just right. And then there is such a luxury in preaching, when you preach sympathetically ;—such a luxury for you and such a luxury for the people. They do not like to be fired at by a glib expert who knows guns perfectly but does not know men,—who makes first-rate arguments but does not hit anybody, because nobody stands just where he aims. Every preacher’s eyes are more or less askew, for shooting, until he has been over among the people, and appreciates their situation.

Hence, misshots. The imaginative and sympathetic preacher (sympathetic because imaginative), has two good and straightforward eyes.

## IMAGINATION IN SERMONS.

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In my last Lecture I called you to consider the function of Imagination in theology ; I now ask you to consider Imagination in Sermons.

It may seem inordinate in me that I give one mental faculty so much space, in a brief series of discourses, especially as that faculty is by no means the supreme one in the minister's outfit ; but I had some things requiring to be said as to pulpit diction, which could come in under the title I have just put forth as well as under any other, and so I have ventured it.

I think that in organizing the materials of a sermon, and getting a skeleton that shall be alive and physiologically articulated at all the joints, one goes through a mental operation precisely like the painter's when he makes a picture—an original landscape. The painter has in his mind the several features that are to go into that picture ;—in other words, he has on hand the materials for it from out of Nature's boundless storehouse. It shall be a sunset in the Adirondack wilderness, in the autumn, when the whole warm air shines, and is in a sweet swoon of peace, and pensiveness ; a region he has often visited just at that season. In his memory and happy mood is everything that goes to make that late-year northland what it characteristically is. He will get his lay of the land from one locality, his forest features perhaps (some of them) from another, his touch of water from another, his mountain distances from still another, and possibly he will shed through all an individual feeling from his own heart, which those places cannot quite furnish ; but which is in no wise incongruous to those places :—some added tenderness in the half-sad autumnal splendor, it may be, drawn from his experiences in this weary world. Now those constituent particulars must come together in his picture

imaginatively. It is not carpenter-work he is called to. First, he must imaginatively see those sober glories of the Autumn, those waters, those trees and those heights. Not remember them. That is not enough. That is too cold. He must remember them emotionally, lovingly, with the vivid reality of a thorough-going interest, and that is Imagination as distinguished from recollection. Or, to use the terminology of my last Lecture, it is Imagination recollective.

Next, he must combine those clearly-seen, beautiful remembrances ;—and he must combine them in such a way that, although the counterpart of the picture can be found nowhere in all broad Nature, yet it shall be natural ; after the precise manner of Nature ; just what Nature would have done if she had happened to think of it ; Nature's very style.

He might throw on to his canvass all those artistic recollections of his, and thus get what combination there may be in juxtaposition ; but that is nothing. That does not make a picture. There is no life in it ; no coherency, no proportion, no answering of part to part, no naturalness, that is, nothing that Nature ever did or would ever consent to do. Nature, as we see her, is the silent rhetoric of God, his way of expressing himself, his practical testimony as to what He likes ; and all human art, (real art) is simply a loving conformity to, or reproduction of his style : which style we suppose was not taken up by him arbitrarily, but in deepest reason, or because he could not remain a reasonable being and not take it up, if he took up any style and expression at all.

Well, how shall our painter get his divine combination. He cannot tinker it up, as I have already said. He needs more than a good mechanical intellect ; more than reason even :—he needs Imagination in its creative function ; not its recollective function, its creative—exactly the faculty which God had when he filled the primeval voids with his picturesque creations, great and small and numberless. I have struck now an ultimate fact of the human mind. I asked, how does that man combine ? Nobody knows. He does not know, himself. He has in him, as a man made in the image of God, a power to create pictures that are not a blasphemy against Nature, and therefore are pictures. That is the whole story—the whole explanation, I mean. His mental movement in that creative act is spontaneous, unreflective, instinctive, instant, and emergent, like a birth ; a great joy, but a great mystery ; a man-mother he is,

and who shall tell how growth goes on in the creative womb. It is amazing that a feat so complex as that combination can be performed so uncalculatingly, and so at a stroke ; a feat so complex, I say, for, when he throws his parts together, they modify each other, and are therefore no longer the same things that they were when in separation. Certain colors kill each other. Stand up a tall man by a short one, and the tall one tallens and the little one shortens. So our painter must discount all those mutual modifications of parts, on the instant when he conceives his picture. It will not do to rush in all the parts and clip and hew and match afterwards. That were botchy. That were to be a mechanic. That were unlike the Infinite Creator. No, he must rhyme part with part, and make the whole thing sing by a stroke of the Imagination exercising herself in her most awe-inspiring function.

Now a sermon, in its highest idea, is a work of art, if there ever was one. It need not be made for art's sake, or with a predominant artistic impulse, the moral earnestness of the minister may fill his whole consciousness, so that he has no thought of art and would abhor himself if he had—nevertheless when you come to examine that outcome of his mind and soul, behold it is artistic ; it is not merely truthful, it is esthetic, it pleases the taste ; unbeknown to himself he has wrought a work satisfactory to all the gods ; it has the effect of a picture ; his numerous items of material are in there, in juxtaposition to be sure, but (ten times more than that) in congruity, in organic coherency, in a wonderful mutuality, each item fashioning every other item with which it stands related. So in the Apollo Belvidere, limb is joined to limb and function to function in an elastic harmony and mutual support and fine equilibrium, which fascinates one like a poem. That is the sermon in its perfect form when the Imagination has done its whole work upon it.

Sermons are oftentimes formed in a mutilated way. The formative instinct in the author was not strong enough, and the result is a living thing, with numerous disproportions. Perhaps it is all disproportions. The man haphazard along through it, and you would say, that it has no law and order at all, did you not know that even disorders have their laws. The higher sort of mind moves in philosophical order, and that we all call order, as though there were no other. But if the sermonizer moves in the utmost possible inconsequence, and gets from point to point by connections the most trivial,—as where the word that happens to be last in each sentence

is permitted to suggest the next thought,—even there, there is law, a law of association between the thoughts ; so that you have in the production an artistic element—a slight one—and are pleased. It is not utter madness—though even in madness there are obscure links of coherency in the thinking, whereby the mind makes known that it still resists confusion and absolutely will not surrender to chaos and be a personal entity no longer.

I might give you illustrations of discourses unimaginatively organized—though I need to leave this part of my subject pretty soon.

Sometime since I prepared a line of discourses on Old Testament personages, in which I proposed to know, myself, all that could be known about those several men and women. So I made my studies rather prolonged and minute and accumulated more material than I could use ; which furnished me a good opportunity to see whether or not I had any imagination for the work of picturesque organization of material. The prose way of discoursing on those characters, would have been to start in at their birth, or earlier (among their ancestors) and after getting them born, travel right along down their lives chronologically, telling everything, little and great, thing after thing in stupid faithfulness and garrulity like the chattering nurse in Rome, five minutes on a little quiet thing and five minutes on a great one, mechanically conscientious and equitable—for is not a thing a thing, forever—that is the prose way, I say, of doing such discourses (and all discourses). But the way of Imagination is thus :—She selects from her superabundant material, as that painter did ; and she puts to the front those things—a few—which show, and contain, the life, soul and essential spirit of the person to be portrayed, in his distinctive attributes. There are words, and there are deeds and passages, in every one's life, whereinto are compressed his entire self ; by them you know instantly his whole compass, his essential temper, his determinate rank in the creation ; and after that to search through the vast minutiae of his career is unnecessary :—or, if you do search, there is no need to take it all into your public discourse. Life is not long enough. The intellect and patience of human hearers are limited. You must stop speaking sometime ; and while you are speaking, you must make headway along your road ; you must not pick every flower, and point out every view, and sit down on every green spot ; you must rapidly gather the general bloom of things ; and whereinsoever you introduce into your picture of the man in question, the secondary, and



little, in his career, you must do it by a touch ; put those trifles in the vistas yonder, in the background. That, I repeat, is the way of the imagination.

And what I noticed in myself was this (to tell the whole story) : when I was not fagged and limp, I had the stamina to see that idol and strive for it, and partially reach it ; but when my brain had gone all and utterly into preliminary work, I inclined to tell all I knew, stringing it along in a dull, petty, chronological manner, which had in it the somnolency and endlessness of the flow of time.

That is one illustration of unimaginative organization, and I might give many. It is unimaginative to have your sermon taper instead of cumulate, like the breaking away of waters, tremendous at first and feeble at last ; or like a thunder-burst, magnificent, and followed by a long patter of ineffectual rain-drops. It is unimaginative to swell one head of your discourse, to the injury of the others. An eye to proportion—an artistic eye, would avoid that. It is unimaginative to fall in love with the portico of your sermon, and elaborate it till, in the nature of things, the sermon itself cannot amount to much, comparatively. That is setting up a tall man along side of a little, to the injury of both. These unbalanced developments are caused, sometimes by redundant vigor and sometimes by lack of vigor. A man full of fire, and full of matter, enjoys an unfenced range, like a swollen spring river, and inclines to take it. A man feeble, on the other hand, when he comes to sermonize, is like a feeble man carrying a burden ; he staggers about, and the lines of grace and proportion he knows not. But in the case of men weak and of men strong, the more definitely they have the idea of a rightly organized discourse, and the more they discipline themselves on that idea, the more will they come to move artwise ; until after not many years one may find it almost impossible to be otherwise than substantially artistic. The gondoliers in Venice, navigating forever along narrow canals bounded by the stone walls of the buildings, and compelled to shy those walls, will graze them to a hair, hundreds of times a day, and never strike ; as though the prudence and skill of the boatman had at last passed into his craft, and given it the self-preserving instinct of a human soul ; and it is one of our satisfactions that by dint of much effort, and much repetition, and that self-restraint which is one of the most difficult of lessons for powerful and ebullient minds, law-keeping and rigid art-work may become second nature.

I wish to repeat once more, that, although I use the word *art* a good deal in relation to sermons, I do not mean that sermons are to be made in devotion to art as the supreme enthusiasm of the preacher's soul—surely he has grander inspirations than that;—but sermons are to be fashioned into some shape, either good or bad; and while a badly formed sermon may not wholly fail of good effect, yet the good effect is not the result of the bad form ever—but in spite of bad form rather; and always, other things being equal, the sermon artistically constructed most pleases God, and most powerfully reaches men. That is the reason I am talkative on this subject and urgent.

But let us pass now to the language of the pulpit, and to Imagination as related to the use of language.

It has been generally agreed that words, most of them, are physical things, in the sense that they were originally descriptive of physical phenomena. They were descriptive of those phenomena, either as imitating the sound of them—for example, *plash* and *dash* mimic the noise of waters, and *rush* and *buzz* and *whizz* the noise of wings;—or as being mysteriously fitted in some other way to express those phenomena. I cannot enter into the acute controversies of scholars at this point;—as for instance, whether the great body of terms are strictly imitative in their origin. It is enough for me that the specialists in this department incline to unanimity on the idea that, in one way or another, human language began in physicals, and in all subsequent use has smacked of the same. The first use of language, naturally, was to indicate things visible, tangible, and audible; the things of sense; but by and by, as man developed into self-consciousness, and reflected on his own states of mind, it became necessary for him to devise terms descriptive of those states;—and behold! then it was found that the physical terms before mentioned were suitable to that purpose. Somehow, they were. Somehow. And how? Some say, the words to voice the supersensible were arbitrarily chosen, just as mathematicians chose the letters of the alphabet to express the quantities which they manipulate, when there is not the least thing in those letters making them more fitted to the use in question, than forty other conceivable signs might be. But whether the truth or not, the most fascinating opinion seems to be that if the words which express physical phenomena are also convenient to describe immaterial phenomena, and have actually been put to that use, it is because there

is some subtle, ordained similitude between those physicals and those immaterials ; something which makes them the best instruments to that end. Of course by long use words tend to lose their original, sensuous flavors, and the average man is likely to be confident that all words which have been applied to supersensible uses for ages, have had the face-marks of their original, physical coinage entirely rubbed off, and are now insignificant and arbitrary terms, like the *a*, *b*, *c*, and *y*, *z*, of the algebraist. And the average man is right, to this extent :—that the mass of men use language without recognizing or caring to recognize, the primary import, and suggestion, of each term they speak. It is enough, they think, to say, *reflect*, without recollecting the fact that it means *turn back* ; and *distract* without recollecting that it means *pull apart*, and *prefer*, without recollecting that it means *set before*. Why should we recollect these things (say they) :—what use is there in it, when the mental states indicated by *reflect*, *distract*, and *prefer*, are unmistakably pointed out, and fixed, without recollecting.

In regard to this view, I put in two observations—and by those observations get to the point in this subject which I am concerned to reach.

First. That words themselves seem to have an instinct of their origin, in that each word is inclined to refuse forever to be applied to any use in the vocabulary of the supersensible, which is contrary to, and destructive of, its primal and physical import. *Reflect*, for instance, meant *turn back* ;—well, *reflect* never can be brought to consent to being applied to a forward-reaching action of the mind ; it knows its own meaning if the average man does not, and it proposes to stand by its own first meaning, whether men care anything about it or not. There is that fine and curious persistency in words. They do not ask for any combinations of scholars to preserve them from perversion ; they preserve themselves. They are not afraid to be used profusely by the unthinking and inexact multitude ; they know that they rule their own destiny and can never be confused. That first.

Secondly, it is the privilege of every man—and every preacher—to enter into this secret of primary significances, and, when he uses a word, to use it with a relish of its origin ; a thorough-going test in many cases—a zest similar to his who handles antique manuscript, or an old missal, or a piece of armor worn by a world's hero in some world-convulsing exigency ; or any other thing that is

wonderful and full of pathos by reason of its history. Words are not sounds but things, when you track them back to things. The signature of the Duke of Wellington, was so many letters plus the Duke, and all terms of language are so many words plus things, solid things, concrete indestructible actualities.

It may be questioned whether, in the swift run of utterance, especially of public utterance, any man is capable of tasting his own words in that way, and enjoying their ground flavors, and hearing their primeval undertone. But all men have some sense of the words they use, else they could not go on ; and nobody would want them to go on. They may not sense the physical element therein, but they sense something in them. They do it with infinite rapidity. Even when they utter hundreds of words a minute, they are sprightly enough to catch up some honey from each term. And if they can catch some, they can catch more ;—in fact a practiced and scholarly man can catch enough to keep him in a sort of intellectual intoxication. I have listened to men in public discourse who have sometimes jerked me from my sitting almost by some heavily-charged word, or some sudden compact and fiery sentence. Language spoken is not a flight of dull, wooden balls, but an outgoing of bells, sonorous meanings old and new, tones of time, tones faint and far-away sometimes, but distinct and good like the clear whistle of the boatswain in a hurricane.

And, as I have implied, when a man uses language in that perceptive and pregnant way, all people who listen to him catch the contagion of his gusto. The most ignorant feel that something is going on ; that the man is not showering forth X's, Y's, and Z's, which, as simple letters, signify nothing, so that so far as effect is concerned he might as well vociferate inarticulately ; but that there is a boom in all he says.

Why is it that old sermons are such unusable ammunition, the abhorrence of the preacher and the soporific of the hearer. When first preached they were good enough ; first-rate, every one thought, perhaps. What has happened to them ? Nothing. There they are in their aboriginal grandeur. But something has happened to the preacher. When that discourse first came from him, he was in the full sense of its terms :—he finished it Saturday, and by Sunday the birth-warmth was not dead in it—he spoke what he knew, and what he knew as he went along ;—every common word was alive to him, and he was alive in it ; but since then time has slipped in, and

many events, and he has lost his connection with his words ; they were his at the time, he gathered them up from the general stock and mass of language and made them his, but now they have gone back into the general and public stock again and are not his, and therefore when he uses them he feels like a hypocrite—he is saying what he does not feel, dispensing words that he has not refilled. They are hollow, and sound hollow, and he wishes he was out of it. The only way to make an old sermon an honest thing and magnetic again, is to pass it through a re-gestation ; let it enter a second time into its father's womb and be born.

And I have had a fancy that sermons delivered memoritor must be ever more in the curse of old ones, more or less. I never memorized a sermon, but I have memorized speeches—long ago—and when I spoke them, I always felt that I was shamming ; and to-day, when I listen to such an orator, I am seized with a painful feeling of unreality. I imagine I am, at any rate. I must not be too dogmatic about this, because eminent men, I believe, are advocating the memoritor practice. Possibly, enough practice and some native facility takes a preacher at last beyond the unrealism of this business :—for it is unreal to be talking to your fellow men in the use of only one mental faculty, the memory—or in the use of that mainly. When you stand before a congregation you profess that you are there and that it is you who speak, whereas there is nothing there but your memory, I am supposing, (your memory and your body,) which is not you by nine-tenths, or more.

But, as I said before, I must not make myself offensive to wiser men than myself. When they speak of their freedom, and joy and effectiveness in this kind of preaching, I love them, and believe what they say ; but I am not convinced.

I spoke of using words in the delight of original relishes ; but I must add, as a part of my subject, that these root-relishes are not the only ones a preacher may have in his sermonizing.

When a word has started and passed into use, it begins to have a history, and after many years it has gained a great history ;—it has had to do with great men and great events, and it has the same interest that an eminent personage has. Let William Gladstone land on our shores, or Victoria, or Alfred Tennyson, and it would not be the landing of so much flesh and blood, five to six feet high, weighing from one to two hundred pounds ; but it would be the landing of the Queen of England, the Poet Laureate of England, and the



Statesmanship of England ;—it would be the arrival of incarnate England, as you might say. In like manner, words have arrived in our century, all moss-grown, and festooned with associations, picked up in their long journeyings down from times of old ; and it is so much added to a man's pleasure in the use of them and so much added to the force of his expression, if his mind detects, and savors, those precious additions.

And another thing. Supposing I admit that all this thought of mine in regard to root-relishes and historical relishes (as I have called them) is visionary ; and that, however perceptive and imaginative a man may be, he simply cannot get back into those old contents of the words he uses. Grant it to be true that the greater part of human words, in the long attrition of use, have been rubbed down till their coinage is not visible, and they therefore are simply conventional signs, which could be just as well exchanged for numerical signs :—the particular mental act now called reflection being called 1, and the act called perception 2, and the act reverence 10 ; supposing that to be so. It is a highly afflictive supposition, but we will put up with it for a minute or two. Has imagination therefore ceased to be of great account to the writer and speaker, in his choice of language, and in his joy while he uses it ? I tell you nay. For, as these empty conventional signs are employed to designate this and that,—as, reflection, perception, reverence, and the like, among things spiritual and physically imperceptible, and thousands of things likewise in the physical domain ; it is of great importance that those numerous designated things should be luminously and intensely seen, at the instant, by the man speaking and writing ; and it belongs to Imagination to do just that thorough and fervid seeing. If that seeing is not done, or in proportion as it is not done, words have no sense at all. I have already supposed that they have no historical and derivative meanings, and that they are like human beings without an ancestry or a creator ; and now their only other possible significance is taken away from them. The preacher writes them down and delivers them to his people, as so many Zeros. He has no interest in them ;—for how can he have an interest in terms that came from nowhere, and are practically pointed at nothing. And as he has no interest in them, the interest of his hearers cannot amount to much, and I do not see why preaching should be any longer continued. No, no. If I say a word to mean something, I must distinctly see that intended thing—the more

distinctly the better—and that seeing, in so far as it is realistic, and emotional and picture-like, is the work of Imagination.

While I am on this matter of language, with its coinage all effaced by centuries of use, permit me to refer you to old creeds and old liturgies as frequently examples of that thing. The creeds and the liturgies, in themselves, are well enough; but reiteration tends to dull a man's sense of words;—if he does not watch, and incessantly energize upon them, he loses not only their genetic meaning and vigor, and not only their historical meaning and vigor, as understood by the theologians and their generation who wrote them, but also their present meanings; and, in this loss of all meanings, the recitation of these forms is as useless as an inarticulate monotone. Even that monotone might have some good influence in it, provided it was solemn, and I should advise people to congregate on the Lord's day and go through that, if nothing better could be had. The sound of the wind in pine forests is moral;—all grave tones steadily prolonged are moral; and liturgies will live and creeds will keep on, for the sake of the sound of them if for no other reason;—but it must hurt their feelings dreadfully to be reduced to that, when they are conscious that they are live things; that they had a parentage and a powerful parentage, and have had a career, too; that they did mean something on the lips of those who made them, and were intended to describe forever certain august realities.

I should like to spend about twenty-four hours of continuous speech here in your presence, running the terms of the Nicene Creed back to their radicals (so far as possible,) reproducing the history too of that great symbol, and especially its origination, and then when you and I had come into full possession of the dear old thing, standing up all together and reciting it. We should hardly be able to contain ourselves. The familiar drone of utterance would be changed to a play of thunderclaps, comparatively. We should have a Mt. Sinai here, and an awfulness as of God made visible and audible.

We sometimes deplore the theological discussions that come up, and are afraid that the phraseologies of the fathers will get pounded into dust by the combatants, and we shall never have them any more; but these contentions are one resounding way of notifying men that they must not any longer use their old phrases in an imitative and numb manner; that they must get themselves back into the sense of their creeds, the historical sense, and see whether

they are willing to subscribe to that sense wholly—if they are, it will be good for them to have been forced to do it afresh ; and really their creeds now will be the very breath of their life ; while if they find themselves not willing to subscribe, they are put into a wholesome live struggle to make something whereto they can subscribe, and can voice in assembled multitudes with a holy awe, and a holy jubilation.

For one, I have ceased fearing that time-honored forms in the church, creedal and liturgic, will suffer permanent damage, in the vehemency and crush of debate. The Catholic symbols are the common-sense of the Christian ages, crystallized and solidified ; and they will bear a good deal of knocking about. They are the survivals of the fittest, and are therefore likely to survive. I do not know what verbal modifications may be forced upon them, nor how far their phrases may be refashioned ; but I certainly do not look to see any breach in their substance. And as to forms less hallowed, whatever they are, forms provincial, forms denominational, forms philosophical, I am glad to see them put through the threshing mills of debate, at intervals, so that the immortal in them may redemonstrate its indestructibility, and the partial and ephemeral in them may be compelled to show its insufficiency. Not all insufficient things are worthless. The butterfly needs a worm-form by which to climb to its winged state ; and Truth seems to be willing to put up with imperfect statements, by way of transition to something higher. She is a veritable butterfly, though, in heart and fact, whether detained as yet in her worm-life, or all emerged and fair.

Another service which Imagination renders us in our sermonizing, is her prolific contribution of images, and imageries, drawn from life and from Nature.

It is thought, by some, to be dangerous to accept these contributions and let them into our pulpit language. And it is dangerous, provided we are going to be so delighted with them as to use them for their own sake. If we abjure all esthetical dallyings, all dancing up and down in a twitter over our pretty things that we have thought of, our analogies, and decorations, and fanciful outflowerings ; if we just robustly turn all our devices of words in upon the ends of God, the benefit of men and the setting forth of his glory, then Imagination is not merely innocent, but it is the very life of speech. And see what things she does.

First, mark in what an omniverous and rich way she works up into utterance, all the familiar things of human life,—even its homely

things ; though, to tell the truth, the moment she touches them they are no longer homely, but are transfigured in the light she sheds. Did you ever watch the workings of prose minds and observe how undaintily they handle the common, and are vulgarized by their contact with it. They bring it into the sanctuary sometimes, and it does not fit the holy place and is an offence. They cannot enter the common, without wallowing in it and drowning ; whereas the imaginative mind is like the birds that cut the water, and even the puddle, with their swift wing and toss it up into the shine and sparkle of the sun. William Wordsworth undertook a good deal of that kind of work, (the working up of the common into noble expression) and did not always succeed, some thought ; but, in larger part, he did succeed, and beautified life at many points. Robert Burns succeeded. Thomas Carlyle succeeded pretty often. What pile was there in which that man would not grub, when his rage was on him ; but how rarely his grubbing soiled him, and how full his writings are of the affairs that surged around him ; full of the great and noble, full of the minute, and the lowly and the mean ; full of human life as it literally went on in his day and land, whether in palace, or bog hut ; its tragedy, comedy, pathos and glee.

This charging of rhetoric with the strong stock of daily and humble things, is often seen in uncultivated and even vulgar men, who are under no bondage of conventionalities and speak their minds with absolute veracity, and point-blank. Witness that western border-man, described by Mark Twain, a man earnest and coarse, but affectionate, who sought the services of a minister just on from the East, well-dressed, civil-spoken, and proper, to attend the funeral of a prominent rough whom all the rude men believed in, and loved, and who must be spoken of in funeral speech with force and enthusiasm. Read what he says and take in the vividness and reality of it. I rode with a New York omnibus driver once upon a day for some miles, on the top of his vehicle, and heard his opinion on many things ; and noticed, first, that he had opinions sharply defined and reserved ; next, that he had no fear of mortals in showing them ; and finally, that he had a powerful vocabulary, part slang and part English ; but all of it bottomed on concrete, on stage-driving or other plain and ponderable realities.

Sailors speak in the same way often, and hunters, and the mob, seasoning their talk with terms drawn from their own craft, and putting in sledge-hammer emphases, like the heavy strokes of their

daily toil. Of course, nothing can redeem such talk as that about Buck Fanshaw's funeral, and we must all keep wide away from the absolutely gross; but a refined man with poetic capacity—with Imagination, I mean—can touch and turn almost anything into gold—he can make the dirt blossom into a beauty that seems sky-born;—and he does it in ways that are easy to his faculty; as, for example, where a thing is too gross for direct expression, and yet has value in it, he just alludes to it, in a far-away manner, in the use of some term that is itself high and fine, it being a curious fact that the purest and most cultured minds will receive a quite unmentionable thing, provided it is conveyed by indirection, and with a self-evident non-fellowship with its mere grossness.

But life is full of things not gross, but only common, and lowly, and those we may easily use—and men most scholarly and fastidious may take these up into their speech profusely, and had better. A man of horses and stables in my congregation, long ago, left the church after one of my sermons, saying:—"Our Minister is pretty strong on the bit." Now there was no harm in that. After an evening of uneasy and uncomfortable debate, wherein a certain Mr. Blank had been combative and unpleasant, a man said to me as we left:—"He had the hay on his horns to-night, sure enough." Could anything be better than that, drawn from farm experiences? To say:—"Blank was combative," would have been abstract and decorous; but Imagination brought in a contrary-minded and punching, horned creature, who punches for sheer punching's sake, and just because she is overflowing with wickedness; as is shown by the fact that she lunges into innocent and unresisting haystacks. You see the animal with her head bestrown, and her look of general belligerency. It is pictorial. It is like Dr. John Brown's description of the great dog Rab, whom he has made immortal in that sweetest, and realest, and deepest of sketches, "Rab and his Friends." "He belonged to a lost tribe" (said the Doctor.) "He was brindled and grey like Rubislaw granite; his hair short, hard, and close, like a lion's; his body thick-set like a little bull—a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog. He must have been ninety pound weight, at the least; he had a large blunt head; his muzzle black as night, his mouth blacker than any night, a tooth or two being all he had, gleaming out of his jaws of darkness. His head was scarred with the records of old wounds, a sort of series of fields of battle all over it. one eye out, one ear cropped as close as



was Archbishop Leighton's father's; the remaining eye had the power of two; and above it, and in constant communication with it, was a tattered rag of an ear, which was forever unfurling itself like an old flag; and then that bud of a tail, about one inch long, if it could in any sense be said to be long, being as broad as long;—the mobility, the instantaneousness, of that bud, were very funny and surprising, and its expressive twinklings, and winkings, the inter-communications between the eye, the ear, and it, were of the oddest and swiftest. "Rab had the dignity and simplicity of great size; and having fought his way all along the road to absolute supremacy, he was as mighty in his own line as Julius Cæsar or the Duke of Wellington, and had the gravity of all great fighters." Dr. Brown then goes on to compare Rab's look with the look of the great Baptist preacher, Andrew Fuller, and declares them alike. That is what the Doctor said about Rab; and anybody who cannot see that pictured dog, ought to be bitten by him.

I am speaking of Imagination dealing with lowly things, and making the lowly interesting and even noble, and I made this quotation under that head; but I cannot help diverting long enough to point out the fine interfusion of that faculty through almost every word of that piece of writing. First of all, and before he began, the Doctor evidently with his mind's eye saw his dog, in his total presentment and rounded majesty and vigor. There he stood gnarly and real—all dog. There is a sort of genius in that. Then notice his word-work. He compares the dog's color to that of Rubislaw granite, but in that comparison, after the true manner and instinct of Imagination, he secures more than color; he gives a foreshadowing of the dog's massiveness and solidity. Rubislaw granite, said he. Next, he compares his hair to a lion's hair, and in that he secures hair for Rab and a leonine element. A distinct imaginative advance in the description. Another man would have said:—"his hair was short, hard, and close," but Brown added:—"like a lion's." Then:—"his body, was thick set, like a bull, a sort of compressed Hercules of a dog." Mark those vigorous concretes, bull, and Hercules—and that splendid adjective, compressed. If he had simply said Hercules, he would have done a strong thing, and touched Rab off with a sort of dignity; but when he added, compressed Hercules, he got his description down to the dimensions of a dog and at the same time dropped out not a single penny-weight of the Herculean strength, but only condensed it and made it more awful. Then his mouth,

a midnight abyss and mystery, made more dark by two white teeth in it. And his head mapped with battle-fields, (his fighting character still amplified upon, you see, that is, kept, in the foreground in the midst of all comparisons, and by them) ;—his ear close cut off (more fight)—like the father of Archbishop Leighton (a humorous and affectionate assimilation of dog life, and human life, wherein the man, (the bishop's father) lost nothing and the dog got a love-lift. Then : "the other eye had the power of two"—how harmonious that is with all we have already been made to know of Rab :—it is an addition to the picture, but it is an addition congruous with granite, lion, little bull, compressed Hercules, and scarred head—a tremendous eye. And his one remaining ear was torn, and tattered, and flag-like, but fearfully vital, and moving yet : (more fight, and more energy and compressed Hercules.) And his little tail was vital and moving, and knowing—it twinkled and winked just as anybody might, and it interchanged cute winks with that wide-awake ear—the realism of the thing is enough to make a dog laugh—the personalization of those small members is so complete that you cannot take your eyes from them, you would almost be willing to be a dog yourself, to have so much sense in your humble members. No mere man ever did. And then lest Rab might seem to be nothing but a fighter and so be vulgarized, the imaginative and deep-hearted Doctor informs us that he was dignified, grave, and simple, and looked like the Rev. Dr. Andrew Fuller. It would have been prosaic to say that Rab had some mental qualities like men. Of course, he had. All dogs have. That is a fact in nature—a bald, common fact. But Imagination loves to get in her bald, common facts, and make people see them, in a way of her own, in a way so that they shall see them and take to them, and be thoroughly pleased, melted and won over. So in this case, having given us a plain painting of Rab's face—a strong face, but not really pious—she breathes a mild transfiguration over it and leads you to embrace it, in a burst of laughter, by mentioning the distinguished and excellent Dr. Fuller, the great and mighty Baptist Rab.

In all this, my Friends, you note the distinctive marks of that faculty on which I have now said so much :—its vigorous and visional perception, its creative combinations, its heart and heartiness, so that it can be warm and fond over a dog and can drag Julius Cæsars and eminent men of divinity into dog-likeness, and not belittle the

men either—true imagination would never do that ; and its capacity to put itself in his place, whether the place be Rab's, as in this case, or Dr. Chalmers', or dear little Marjorie Fleming's, as in other essays of this same John Brown—than whom no better compacted, or more divinely-tender and true man was ever brought forth of the great Brown stock, I venture to say.

I have really now no time left in which to speak as I ought of the images, and imageries, and numerous enrichments, which Imagination can bring into the diction of the pulpit, out of endless Nature. We preachers have just as much right to Nature as poets have. To be sure, when we go to her, we go on serious business, and we are after grave material therefore, and poets had better go in about the same way—all the great ones do ;—moreover, Nature is grave, anyway ; her most festive shows do not start a man into any frivolity or thin giggle. Nature is never jocose. She makes us laugh sometimes, but it is in some sort as the melodious thunders laugh, not in jollity, but in the soberness of a great joy.

And what can we get from Nature ? Well, read the Poets and see. We can get her repose ; and a really restless diction is not possible to him who is in habitual communion with her. He insensibly gathers up into his speech the spirit of her tranquility. Also, we get rhetorical truthfulness and reality. I have praised Imagination a good deal, but an imagination that does not live in Nature, and in real life, and start all her flights from that solid ground is a phantasmal and moony creature, an inadmissible wild one in the pulpit, in poetry, in art, and in all human expression.

We have seen that it is the instinct of the Imagination to make original combinations, as in landscape painting ; but those original combinations must be strictly conformable to Nature, in all respects. They must be made up of natural material, of actual trees, flowers, seas, green fields, hills, skies, showers, and commotions—and they must organize those actualities as Nature herself is wont to organize them ; otherwise the picture is an insane thing. Well, how shall we get this truthfulness, but by much companionship with Nature. In other words, we get naturalness from Nature. And an Imagination that conserves its naturalness by an habitual stand in Nature, is sure of itself, and sure to do realistic and acceptable work, when called (as the Imagination often is,) to move out into the supernatural, and picture things over there. A man not thoroughly naturalized in Nature is utterly flighty and ridiculous out there. A writer

introduces some supernatural character into his drama, I will suppose. Well, that supernatural personage must be made to speak, and behave himself, something different from a man, for in that way only can it be shown that he is not a man, but a superior being ; nevertheless he must be made to act naturally after all—that is, in the general manner of human nature, else all human readers will spew him out. Imagination projecting herself into the unheard-of, and spinning stories of that land, must keep her two feet down solid, all the while, on the heard-of and familiar, and in that way keep up some sort of congruity between those two lands. And all imaginative rhetoric—in the pulpit or elsewhere—must perpetually rationalize itself and make itself valid and acceptable to good taste ; to Nature in Nature, and to Nature or the natural, in human life as well.

I repeat, we can get from Nature truthfulness and reality in our pulpit expression.

And again, we may diversify and beautify our expression, and make it pithy and rich from the same source. The forms and activities of Nature are a vast language prepared to our hand, and it is as legitimate to express ourselves—all the realities of our souls and all the realities of our total life on earth—through her forms, as it is to studiously keep away from her, and use only conventional terms out of which the Nature element has evaporated at last, so that they are supposed to have a dry and colorless precision. I am not arguing on the question of their superior precision, otherwise I might deny it, but what I am particularly after, at this present, is the variety, and beauty, and vividness, and celestial pith of the naturalistic diction. Dr. Brown called Rab a bull, a lion, a Hercules, a mass of granite of a certain color, a series of old battle-fields, as far as his head was concerned ; a Julius Cæsar and a Dr. Fuller—and several more things. He might have said—Rab—and stopped. But that would not have been much to us who never saw Rab. He might have said lion, or bull, and stopped. Or he might have named the Duke of Wellington and Julius Cæsar, and stopped, But I would not have had him omit Andrew Fuller for anything. What would Rab have been, without Fuller added. Don't you see, Dr. Brown knew the value of natural comparisons, and what hundreds of them there are, and what endless modifications may be put upon a dog by using them freely? So in that case where Hamlet addressed the skull of Yorick. First he said he had ridden on Yorick's back a thousand times. (That is a good many more than he

ever did ride—but Imagination may speak with liberty and she never seems to be lying :) in fact it was truer to say a thousand, than to tell exactly how many times he did ride. Next, Hamlet said :—" Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft." Next :—" where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar." Hamlet, in this instance, drew his particulars from human life and not from Nature, but how every added touch increased the visibility of Yorick to our eyes and made him to us an interesting human thing.

I plead for this versatility and profuseness in ministers. Turn all creation into your diction. Thomas Carlyle ended his life of Oliver Cromwell by calling England an ostrich, with its " head stuck into the readiest bush of old church-tippets, king-cloaks, or what other sheltering fallacy there may be, and so awaits the issue." He closes his life of Robert Burns, with this eulogy, and tender similitude : " While the Shakespeares and Miltons roll on like mighty rivers through the country of thought, bearing fleets of traffickers and assiduous pearl-fishers on their waves, this little Valclusa fountain will also arrest our eye ; for this also is of Nature's own, and most cunning, workmanship, and bursts from the depths of the earth with a full-gushing current into the light of day ; and often will the traveler turn aside to drink of its clear waters, and muse among its rocks and pines." His life of Richter he ends with this natural touch :—" In the moral desert of vulgar Literature, with its sandy wastes, and parched, bitter, and too often poisonous shrubs, the writings of this man will rise in their irregular luxuriance like a cluster of date-trees, with its green sward and well of water, to refresh the pilgrim, in the sultry solitude, with nourishment and shade." He puts in this comparison in the last sentence of his life of Heine—referring to Heine's victorious struggle against adverse circumstances :—" It is but the artichoke that will not grow except in gardens. The acorn is cast carelessly abroad into the wilderness, yet it rises to be an oak ; on the wild soil it nourishes itself, it defies the tempest, and lives for a thousand years." In the last sentence of his life of Schiller, he speaks of him as likely to be " a towering land-mark in the solitude of the past, when distance shall have dwarfed into invisibility many lesser people that once encompassed him, and hid him from the near beholder." Near the close of his life of Walter Scott, he speaks of the pecuniary adversities of



Scott's latter years and of the manful, strong and fatal drudging which he did to redeem himself, and says of him :—" The noble war-horse that once laughed at the shaking of the spear, how is he doomed to toil himself dead, dragging ignoble wheels." And in the final sentence of his sketch of Baillie the covenanter, he calls him—" a rather opulent, but very confused, quarry, out of which some edifice might in part be built." An ostrich with its head hidden in church tippets and so on. A Valclusa fountain. A cluster of date-trees in an oasis. An artichoke as contrasted with an acorn. An ever-visible great landmark in the great past. A proud war-horse condemned to wheels. A rich confused quarry, out of which something might be built.

I select these at random, of course there are a thousand more—and they illustrate a rhetorical habit—a naturalistic habit—a sensuous and metaphorical habit—that is particularly good for preachers. It is legitimate. It is going straight to the original store-house of language. It is resorting to a vocabulary that can never stale. It is speaking to people in a manner they can understand. It makes the things supersensible and metaphysical stand out, and cease to be abstract and remote. It weds Religion to Poetry, and Poetry to Religion, where they belong. It is imitation of the Bible—an oriental, image-freighted, and picturesque book—which has done wonders for man as revealing a salvation for him, but has done a good deal also to keep alive in the cold, reflective, precise and abstract Western intellect, the flush and luxuriance and many-sided metaphorizing, of the fresh youth of the human race.

In this multifarious play of analogies, it is possible to overload your utterance and give your hearers a feeling that their minister was originally designed for a kaleidoscope, and mostly enjoys being that, rather than the bearer of a plain and unconfused message from God to perishing sinners ; but it is easy to avoid that ;—the Bible avoids it—thousands of luxuriant rhetoricians avoid it—and they avoid it in the same way that you must :—namely, by having a high practical end to the which they are pushing with every ounce of their strength. St. Paul tumbles along like a spring freshet sometimes, and his language cannot be parsed by any known rules ;—but he does not pile up any confusion, because the objective to which he drives pulls him on mightily, and pulls him clear out of all word-mongering and all thought of it. As well could Jesus climbing Calvary take pride in his own gait, as this his consecrated Apostle, work up an over-elaborate and showy diction, full of confused glories.

Alfred Tennyson does not lack in these natural imageries of which I am speaking, but he is as simple and easy to understand as a piece of Ionic Sculpture. I opened his book of lamentation over Arthur Hallam the other day, and thought I would show you how this most opulent of word-masters keeps himself within the lines of absolute simplicity and perspicuity; but I find I have no time for that. See the excellent Imagination of John Henry Newman, but how chastened, orderly, and limpid his utterance is. Jeremy Taylor is not so self-restrained. And I have felt that our Dr. Bushnell would have helped the world to understand him faster if he had not set an image in his almost every word like the face and flash of a diamond. Of course, this is the peril of affluence, even as overflows are the peril of well-watered lands; but dear me! let us have waters anyhow. We will dam them. We will hew channels for them. And we had rather be drowned in them, than to dry up and die in the sand-wastes of a diction absolutely and forever arid.

## SHORT SERMONS.

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If I say, as I now do, that I am going to fill this present hour with some remarks on short sermons, I judge that it will seem a rather minute subject to some of you. But I hope to make it sizable gradually, by intertangling it with numbers of things roundabout ; for all things are great if only their relations are opened ;—and then none of the congregations to whom we are sent with our preaching, have any notion that short sermons is a small title, I fancy ;—the most inferior man that listens to us has his mind all made up on the long sermon business,—he may be confused in theology, but on that he is clear. And he is so numerous in these days that we preachers are forced to give some sort of heed to what he says ; especially as all the superior people are in with him and think just as he does.

A short sermon is a sermon that seems short ; it may be fifteen minutes long or it may be an hour. Time has nothing to do with it. If a man is unconscious no speech seems long to him. The hearer fast asleep is willing you should go on till you are tired out. And, what is the same thing, the hearer so absorbed by what you are saying as to be unconscious, does not charge the sermon with being prolix. Time is measured, not by clocks, nor even by the rotation of the earth, but by the state of our minds, and the things going on therein. All experience proves that. Absolute mental vacuity has no time-measure, neither has mental concentration much.

But, I pass from these scattering remarks, to the sad work of drawing out a list of the things that make sermons seem long :—things in the minister, I mean. To be sure, there are some things outside of the minister that will do it. Bishop Potter, of New York, went to dedicate a very fine church ;—and after the service, when the people were gathered about in a bubble of happification over

the goodly edifice now completed and sanctified, it was noticed that he was silent. And when some one at last ventured to inquire : "Do you not like our Church," he said :—"O yes, it is a grand establishment,—and has only three faults." Of course they wanted to know right off, what those were. "You can neither see, nor hear, nor breathe in it," said the Bishop. As good a description of a first-class, modern, gothic meeting-house, as was ever given perhaps—so far as it goes.

Well, sermons are apt to be long inside of such structures. The preacher's face is full of holy emotion, but nobody can see it. The preacher's sermon is full of the best sort of material, and is solidly phrased, and charged with edification ;—so that one would naturally say : "the more of such a sermon the better." But the people do not say that who sit in those parts where the speaker's voice rolls around in reverberations and half of his articulations are lost. The preacher is wide awake, demonstrative and impressive, but not to those who are sensitive to bad air, and are semi-comatose on account of it. My church in Hartford is a little inclined to some of these weaknesses, and I have always felt that my people do not know what a preacher I am. When I take my natural swing I preach about forty to forty-five minutes ; but a sermon of that number of pages in that edifice takes an hour, because I cannot speak with any rapidity where each word is going to be reduplicated, and rolled around, and take five minutes perhaps in getting down from among the fascinating arches into people's ears, well lodged and articulate.

I could tell you a great deal about such things, from experience and from hearsay,—the miserable external things that diminish our pulpit power, and make us tedious ;—however, my purpose does not lie in that direction, but rather in the direction of our faults, whereby our sermonizing has a look of too much length.

A monotonous voice makes length, enormously. There is nothing that gives such a sense of eternity as a well continued sober monotone. Always at the sea-shore, I think of that. Always, too, in pine forests. The hum of a distant factory will do it, if only the hum has depth and solemnity. I stood among the graves around Melrose Abbey and heard the Abbey clock strike off the hours ; and ruminated on the old-time, and all-time sound of those prolonged bell-strokes. They were mellow enough, and not unalluring to the esthetic ear ; but I forgot all about esthetics, and all about

the graves that encircled me, some of them interesting enough ; and all about the dismantled and pensive Abbey, and everything else on earth or in heaven, and just considered that unvarying bell, and the resound of time in it.

So a sermon :—it may be esthetic, there may be supreme melodies in it, it may be architectural, Abbey-like or whatever, and festooned with luxuriant church ivies ;—a perfect love of a sermon ; but if, through it all, there drones on a pulpit voice, impressive but eternal,—it must be that all men will say :—“ is not that a little long,—would not our minister, good man, be more edifying if he knew when to stop.” Well, he did stop. He was only half an hour, but they had a feeling, all through, that he had had them in hand twice that time.

Now, Brethren, there are some things continually operating on preachers to make them monotonous in the voice ;—some things particularly hard to resist. Our themes require a solemn voice in the main ;—and we speak on holy days, and in a holy place, and after preparatory holy exercises in our closets,—we are in the presence of God, and we must cause the people to feel that they are ;—and a voice dramatic, a voice colloquial, a voice humorous, a voice very various anyway, seems utterly ruled out in the nature of the case.

Some twenty years ago, one Communion Sabbath in my church, my wife, not being strong, thought she would not arrive till the close of my discourse. But she arrived some minutes before the close, and there in the porch she listened to my goings on. She could not hear the words, but she heard the voice, and noticed the voice all the more because that was all she could hear. And I was much surprised, and much grieved, to have her say that I moved that morning in a perfectly measured and wearisome cadence ;—the thing I hated, and always had. It showed me that our kind of work will cadence, and measure off, and make tiresome almost anybody—if he does not look out.

But how shall he look out. First, let the theological seminaries put their fledgelings into the hands of an elocutionist, a knowing, determined, immitigable man, who will not take no for an answer ; and thus let some incipient good habit be worked up ; a glimmering possibility, (if not probability), that the young men will begin right in their ministry.

And when they have begun, let them cultivate a theology, and a general way of looking at things, that permits some flexibility and



human warmth of voice. Methodists never preach monotonously. They believe in some terrible things, just as we do ;—no man can look out among the facts of the creation and honestly deny forty terrible things ;—but they believe in forty gracious things and lovely, super-eminent over all terribles ; and believe in them in such heartiness and constancy that it keeps their feeling in a shout ;—their sermons shout ;—they weep, but they shout ;—they preach Perdition with a gospel underflow of hallelujah. I heard them all my youth, and left them in my youth, but I believe they are more right than we are (many of us) in this thing. Christianity is not a Jeremiad—not exactly. It premises Jeremiads, and a sad state of things indescribable, but those Jeremiads it proposes to drown and it is in the world for that one purpose ;—and we, her messengers, ought not to voice her in a manner contrary to her genius. If we let into our voices the monotone of the sea (as I suppose we must a little sometimes), let the “floods clap their hands” also therein, and let an occasional land-sound slip in, and land-smell, as flowers, mown grass and the breath of the dewy night ; the creation is not all pitched on one key. The God of dooms is the God of beauty and delight, too—if there be Hells, and Hell-glooms, as there everywhere are, there be also Paradisaical radiances and cries of joy ;—and in so far as a preacher is in the love of God, continually showered forth on created things, it will modulate his utterance—it will break the flow of his monotony—his voice, always sufficiently serious, will range the entire scale of normal voices ; until perchance by much use and the advance of age, his vocal chords are unelastic and unresponsive to the versatility of his mind. Then he must look what he can't speak—and by that time his face will have become facile to such uses and able to serve him a good turn.

Another way to make a sermon seem long, is analagous to the first one ;—namely,—make your thought monotonous, and your delivery. In my address on Imagination in Ministers, I mentioned that, for substance, and I will refer to it again only a moment. The thought and the delivery of a sermon may be monotonously excellent, as easily as monotonously worthless. It is monotony in either case, and has in it all the well-known effects of this killing quality. I portrayed, you may remember, a monotonous man whom I knew—whose sermonizing had no light and shade, no perspective, no power of the picturesque, but worked on a flat and was all foreground. Human nature cannot endure that. I would bring humor into the

pulpit in careful measures before I would permit it. I would let in dialogue and great vivacity of gestures. I would diversify my themes extremely. I would make one sermon a story ; and one a portraiture, and one a criticism, and one a conversation, and one a dream, and one a poem even, (if I could write poetry). Doubtless we do not want to lower preaching from its divine nobleness ; but pokiness lowers it pretty effectually ;—or if it cannot be said literally to lower it, it does make it of no account, so that the question of high or low ceases to be of much interest.

Again, a device for making short sermons long is, to have but slow progress through your subject. I look back to my early work, and I find several things, by which, unwittingly, I slowed myself and made those sermons undeliverable in all after years. I had one habit like this :—after putting forth a statement and expressing an idea, I proceeded directly to state that thing, with some slight meaning added, or in some minute new aspect ; I was mincing, and microscopic ; I did not make a long, free stride and get on—I do not know but my father helped me into that. He was a preacher himself, and he often declared to me that the average hearer is slow, and needs to be nursed along into a thought by a large reiteration of it in changed form ;—not the bag-pipe exactly (I don't think he meant that), but the bag-pipe with two or three small-voiced attachments. Moreover, I had been under the teaching and under the example of Dr. Nathaniel Taylor, and sympathetically too, who was a sharp reasoner and metaphysician, and advanced by short steps well taken, after the manner of metaphysicians ;—a good thing when you are proving a point and do not intend to have your process of argument broken at any link by the onset of all other metaphysicians combined. But congregations do not like that ;—they like a bold brush—never mind your small touches—strike out your idea in mass, and go along.

Another slowness discovered by me in those first discourses was a habit of showing forth all the steps by which I arrived at my conclusion ; as though your physician, whom you had called, should spend an hour telling you just how he reached your house, whether on foot, wheels, or the back of a horse, and by what path, or cross-lot cut-off. What you want is he and his medicine. And what the people want in ministers, is their conclusions mostly, and not the laborious rationalizing by which they stepped along to them. There is too much of that preaching. It is a good mental exercise to

those who will bear it, but the nineteenth century is an impatient time, and if you have anything to say, wants you to say it and let explanations go. A third way by which I spun out, was in proving things. Proving them. They did not need to be proved very likely, but I wanted to prove them. "O, we admit it, we admit it all," the people were ready to say; "but why do you admit it," thought I. "I am afraid you do not know the reason of the hope you hold, and I am going to tell you." And inasmuch as it frequently is the case that accepted beliefs lie in the soul the most non-germinant and useless things conceivable, because they have been accepted traditionally and conventionally, and not as having been searched out; who shall say that I did not do some good by my arguing on the truisms of Religion. On the other hand, who shall deny that an outright affirmation simply, from a man who knows what he says, is not generally as illuminating and as quickening to blind and dormant believers, as the logicking that we practice on them at such length.

Again, long introductions was a form of tediousness with me. And then many preachers call their hearers to chew the cud of their sermons over again, in extended applications at the end;—too extended, because too repetitious of what has gone before. A subject well wrought out is already applied, and if the minister squares around to the work of formal applications, he must give a distinct impression in them of substantial addition to what has already been said. The boy who was whipped by his pious mother, and then exhorted, begged that the exhortations might be left off. He felt that the subject had been sufficiently applied in the whipping, and exhortations were tedious and unedifying.

Another form of tediousness in sermons is lack of substance. An unsubstantial discourse is always long. Some men are unsubstantial because they have too much facility of thought, and too much facility, especially, of expression. If you have the gift to work up a small-sized thought—an atom of a thing—into a voluminous rhetoric, you are dreadfully tempted to do it. The days are short with ministers,—the working hours in each day,—and their labors are many, and sermons must come along at the rate of several a week, (old or new, or both), and heavy work is not congenial to the unsanctified parts of the ministerial heart, so, if one fair-sized thought can be spread over four Sundays, by force of words, the man feels as the prophet did when he had miraculously expanded

the widow's oil. It is a brilliant thing to expand ideas ;—and if you can do it with a suitable detonation, as when gunpowder suddenly springs into gas and increases its volume from a kernel the size of a pin-head, to fill the whole world—why ! how can you withstand the temptation. Probably you will not. And so, after a while, your people will be looking around to find what makes your wonderful sermons, half an hour long only, feel as though they had been holding forth a week.

Extemporaneous preachers are quite exposed to thinness. But that would lead me into a long and delicate discussion, and I dread it.

The only way to make substantial sermons is to work. Of course you have genius, but you must work. You are to be a settled minister I suppose ;—how settled, time will tell ;—but I can give my word for it now, that if you stay any, anywhere, you must work. And you must work by right methods. Only right methods are fruitful methods. Operate your intellect according to the laws of intellect and it will teem forever. For example, work excursively, and you run thin at last. Work incursively ; that is being interpreted, penetratively, analytically, in the long-bore fashion, and you will find the artesian reservoirs of the creation, and all congregations will rejoice in you. And I want to add, the penetrative habit is as possible for small brains as for large ones. I do not mean that small brains can do all that large ones can ; but they can do all that they can ; while if they do not get into the artesian secret they will never do half in their power.

If you speak with a slow utterance, you will make yourself long ;—long by the church clock, but longer yet in the feeling of your audience. When I was younger than I am now I did not think so much of this, but having been pricked on it myself in these latter years, since I commenced to accommodate my speaking to a high-class gothic interior, I am sensible of the importance of the subject. The force that slows your articulation may be gothic, or it may be approaching age, or it may be an extra solemnity on your part, or an intense appreciation of what you are saying, so that you want to take time to hold on to each word until each word has passed into your mind its whole benediction. As to that last, I find that I am caught in it most when I am reading the Scriptures in the public service. I am in some deep chapter of St. John, say ; and I know that I am travelling over bottomless beds of ore. I do not know it simply as having been told that there are great beds there, I myself

see the gleams of them, and I cannot bear to just run along. So I pause, and I pause, and when I do move I scarcely move, and the people out before me in their pews who are less perceptive than I at the moment, see no sense in my delaying and wish I would go on. Well, on the whole, I had better go on. If I alone were involved in the reading, I would take all necessary time, even as in steam-travel through beautiful countries I would like to slacken the train to ten miles an hour, or less ; but in Bible readings and sermon preachings, as in trains, there are hundreds of others on board—some who care little for beauty, some who cannot possibly sit more than about so long, some who cannot concentrate their minds more than a few minutes. Many classes indeed, together with some children, to whom we ought to accommodate ourselves a little, it may be.

As to slowness caused by solemnity, I have noticed that often on ceremonial occasions. I remember administrations of the Lord's Supper where several clergymen took part ;—special occasions they were, so that ordinance was impressive beyond the common ;—and all those officiators took on, and were loaded by, that exceptional impressiveness, and they abated their natural speed accordingly, (real speed being unsolemn, essentially) ; but when they all did that, and every man of them got on slower than I ever saw him before ; and when moreover, every one of them, in my judgment, struck a gait so deliberate that all show of vigor was lost out of it, and the occasion seemed more likely to be languid than affirmative and heart-filling, I sunk away into wearisomeness. And, I fancy, that our congregations (the congregations of some of us) are habitually afflicted in the same way. Sermons are solemn things, and ordinances are solemn, and worship is solemn, and it is a solemn thing to live at all, but we must not be so oppressed by it as to be dumb, and when we do speak we must not drag behind a certain natural and seemly briskness.

I am reminded here of that to-and-fro of Scripture reading between the minister and the people which has come into many of our unliturgical congregations. I believe in it, and have in it my own church, where it is carried on heartily and unanimously ; but I have noticed that the greater part of the congregations that practice it, are so slow in the delivery of the words that they feeble the whole thing. They cannot keep step together well at such a pace, and they lose the inspiration of concord and a solid march ; and the blessed Scriptures themselves seem to tame down from their



native force under such a languid handling. Perhaps the liturgical churches incline to the other extreme. I have felt so when I found myself unable to take breath often enough to keep up with them, but then the breathing of a Congregational Minister is peculiar to himself, and ought not perhaps to be enforced on all Christendom. That to which we are habituated is easy for us, and seems rational. And it is curious to notice how little strange and open to criticism, a service different from our own seems, when we have been in it for a while and have caught its rhythm.

My next specification as to sermons made long by various devices, is, that if your whole thought in preaching is to unfold your subject, without any special aim at any person or thing in the congregation before you, a chasm is opened between you and them, and they look at you across that chasm, as a spectacle principally ; an interesting one, perhaps, but not half so interesting as you would be if you eyed them with a determined intention ; your eye roaming from pew to pew, and from face to face, so that each listener, soon or later, is likely to feel himself addressed and individually pressed upon in a sort of thou-art-the-man urgency. If you look long and intently into the face of a person asleep, it will wake him, it is said, and many preachers have an eye-power that makes a man feel as though the Judgment Day had come when they light on him ; and I have heard ministers say that they could actually stir up a man asleep, and clean gone away, by focusing their discourse on him ;—not in any personalties, of course, but in a stress of intention. These ministers have no more magnetism and galvanic thrill than you or I, but they avail themselves of the oratorical privilege of taking aim, by voice and by eye, and silent, imperious volition. When I began to preach I did not know this ;—and for years I did not know it ;—and at times I even prided myself on the fact, (for it was a fact), that I could speak to a small assembly as enthusiastically as I could to a larger one, because I drew my inspiration from my subject and not from men,—and I got myself into a miserable habit of not seeing the faces into which I was speaking ; so that a person might sit ten feet in front of me a year without my knowing he was there, or whether he was a man, a woman or a child. Now, that is a great loss ;—a loss to me, and a loss to my hearer ;—he might almost as well have a phonograph speaking to him. When croakers say that preaching is dying out, and that the printing press is going to take its place, we are accustomed to reply ; “preaching

never can die out, because it has in it what the printed page never did, or can have ;—namely, the personal element, man dealing with man, soul on soul, in a divine inter-wrestling, and forty-fold mutuality," but if the preacher sees nobody, and is after nobody in particular, nor even after the congregation at large, that boasted personal element is gone and preaching may be ousted from its function at last.

I have confessed my own sins pretty freely, but of course you will not understand me to say that I take no aim. I do ; but A, B and C would certainly feel, each one, the shock of me more, if he more felt the seizure of my individualizing eye, and the occasional jerk of my will grappled on him ;—instead of being compelled to content himself with the general roar of my subject only. It may be a sublime roar, but it tends to make my speech seem longer than it is.

Close along side of this is the failure we make, when our themes, and our way of handling them, and our diction, are far away from the customary thinking and the daily life of the mass. Put a young man to school from his youth, let college have him four years, and the professional curriculum as many, and then let him go out to address human beings ; and what can be expected of him at first, but more or less separateness from the people ;—who, nine tenths of them, have had no full education, but have had the drill of concrete labor, and the powerful school-mastering of joy and sorrow ;—sorrows deep as the grave, and joys high as heaven. Exactly how much good does it do, to take a whole Sunday morning demonstrating to such, the freedom of the will, or the precise subjective contents of a man going through this and that important experience ?—especially if you use a metaphysical and scholastic terminology, or a theologic terminology brought down from some eminently respectable but remote antiquity. A year ago, I delivered a discourse against the naturalistic school of thinkers, on a certain point ; and I wished to turn on them one of their own guns ;—the doctrine namely, of the relativity of knowledge. So I defined that doctrine—and defined it well ; I have looked back since to see ; well, I say ; that is, with absolute clearness and terms that had color in them, they not being blanched in the round and round of long metaphysical use. I was much pleased with the definition. After church I met one of the brightest women in my assembly, who had been really edified she said, and intellectually stirred up by what I had

preached ; and I ventured to see where that definition had hit her. "I listened to that (said she) with all my might, but when you had finished, I felt the wish that you would begin and go right over it again." So she was hit, and I had a victory in that she now wanted to know what the relativity of knowledge is, (she never did before) ; but for the present, she was just dazed. I am not quite prepared to say I am sorry I went into that business of defining ; it seems too bad to think of that labor as lost ;—still, it may answer to illustrate, in a general and inexact manner, the way we educated, philosophical and bookish preachers have (and we all tend to be so) of climbing up on to our seven-storied topics, and from that awful height raining down our grandiloquent rhetoric on the parched ground beneath ;—the parched ground looks up in a reverential and stunned way, and sometimes feels as though it were being really wet down, and then again does not know whether it be so or not, like that confused and wondering woman whom I named.

A sermon let fall from that height and in that disguise seems long.

And I know no way to avoid such, and get close to men, but by going among men a great deal, and learning to love them man by man, as the redeemed of God committed to your care, and on their way to the eventualities eternal, along a path burdensome and full of ambushes. When a preacher comes to feel that his subjects in the pulpit are the select packages of a divine dispensary, provided for the sick and sorrowful, and the weak, he will be the most practical of mortals, and church-going in his congregation, will seem to mean business every Sunday. I was greatly instructed by a speech I delivered once to a full assembly of sailors in the city of New York. It was the anniversary of their temperance society, and I was the orator of the occasion. I wrote what I had to say, but kept the manuscript in my pocket. And I humbly judged that I had adjusted myself to the occasion,—to a good degree. They listened to me in entire silence and with perfect respect. I presume they were impressed. But when I closed, the presiding minister, who knew what he was about, called up a thick-set sailor-man for a ten minutes talk ; and then they were impressed beyond bounds, and beyond all the proprieties of silence. I felt my superiority even yet, in respect of brains, and culture, and the power to write a good-looking manuscript ; so that I did not propose to exchange with him and be he, but I would like to know for all time the straight cut to men's minds, hearts and wills.

I think we may count on the blessed Spirit of God to assist us in this, provided we open ourselves to him, and never consent to go into our sermoning and our preaching without seeking him. Preaching is not lecturing, but is differenced from that by several marks, and by none more distinctly than by this : that if it is indeed preaching, in preaching's full idea, it is speaking in the impulse and the light of the Holy Ghost. I do not think that sermons of the Holy Ghost are likely to seem long ; partly because their topics are divinely given to us, partly because our style in them is divinely chastened and brought near to the people whom we are inwardly moved to try to bless ; partly because nothing makes the mind of the preacher fruitful, versatile and unmonotonous, like the Holy Ghost, so that we can stand the strain of years and years, ministering to the same congregation without tiring them ; and partly because, when that Spirit of God has done all these things for the preacher, he is sure to go into the minds of the people also, to make them interested and receptive. I gave a sermon on Effectual Prayer, which certain clerical men declared to me was the best argument on that subject they ever heard. Well now, there was no argument in it. It was just a statement of my opinions, and it was written on Saturday morning and in the play of my customary intellect merely. But I never in my life was more authentically moved from on high than in that sermon, and my opinions were mine as given to me, and I spoke by authority ; I and my sermon were instruments of the Holy Spirit ; and I knew that we were, at the time, and what those people called a great argument was a common-place argument made great by supernatural interfusions in both them and it.

Every minister has these experiences. And he needs them. Why ! if you are but a lecturer in the pulpit you are in competition with first-class strong men who spend a life-time perfecting themselves in some speciality, and then consume a month (perhaps months) in preparing a single lecture. And then, there are printed essays, and monographs, and elaborate, powerful volumes which discuss all conceivable subjects ; and the people who listen to you read them ; and your lecturing they insensibly gauge by those high standards with which they are so familiar ; and there, O man, you are, condemned to speak at least twice a week, in an intellectual race with these athletes. I tell you, you cannot do it. Your genius may be great, and your industry gigantic, but you cannot do

it. You must come into the secret of small discourses made mighty by the mighty God in them.

And made reasonably short, too. For, while God the Spirit in a man makes him to be fertile of thoughts, and gloriously communicative, so that you might naturally say:—"He will speak for hours,"—behold! he does not. That same Spirit that starts him, stops him;—precisely as in Nature—in the whole circuit of living things—God observes bounds;—a tree is only so high; you can see the top of it—there is vitality enough in it to push up a mile, but it rounds out its idea and stops; and an animal is so long; and a summer is so many months, and no more;—and it lies in the very idea of a living organism that it is definitely circumscribed, and not boundless. And a sermon God-given and God-wrought is an organism and has sensible limits. In fact, I imagine that a whole course of lectures, which should discuss every feature of good sermons, might be made by simply unfolding that one idea—The Sermon a living Organism.

I will spend the few moments that now remain in giving three rules for shortening sermons. Virtually, I have been giving rules all along, but I have three more.

And first. One way to make a short sermon is to stop. That is a second-grade, and mechanical way, though—and I do not think much of it. Live things ought to stop, for the good and respectable reason that they have reached their term; and they ought not to stop before that. If they do, it is a case of stunting. However, if your sermon cannot be stopped in any other way, you must stunt it. Strike it by lightning. Put a worm to the root of it. Any way to get it stopped. If it is a sermon that has been carpentered together a mechanical way of stopping is as good as any other.

But, secondly, a good way to get brevity is to choose just one thought, and resolve that when you have opened that one, in a fair practical statement of it, you will pull up. Do not take one of those vast and infinitely plural thoughts, like the love of God, but a little one—a very little one, because, the minute you begin to look at it, it will swell. Years ago, I read that at the Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst, they had put an iron harness on a squash and hitched it to a certain mechanism by which they could tell how much the squash would lift by the expansive force of its growth—and it lifted several thousand pounds. It was bound to grow. So an idea, diligently considered, tends to grow and cannot



be repressed. You plant it in a pint pot and think that is enough, but it is not. So you must be careful to get a thought little enough, else you will have a sermon too enormous for anything. Or if you take one of the vast thoughts, take only one aspect of it, and work that. Aim at twenty to twenty-five minutes ;—and then, all the first minutes, push on through your material rapidly—use it up fast—so that when you come to the last half of your discourse you may be sure of spinning out to your goal, in somewhere near your predetermined time. Most of the half hour sermons I ever wrote were started for about twenty minutes, and grew the other ten minutes by the irresistible dilation of life. I fashioned them for the time mentioned, by selecting an apparent mustard-seed of a topic, and then, when it began to get big, throwing out half the things I might say on it.

This leads me to my last rule—or word of caution. Do not think you must put in to your sermon everything that belongs to the theme you are on, and all you can think of ;—nor even all the important things. You will speak again on that subject some day. You are a settled minister probably—which, in this nineteenth century, is a sarcastical term, meaning a few years. But you will stay a few years. And some day you will come up to that theme from a different direction, and then you will work in the material that you discarded on that first occasion. I often keep my redundant memoranda against such a day as that. Consider too, that your people have no sense of loss when you incorporate in your discourse only a part of the ore you had dug out. You have a large and full-toned conception of what your sermon ought to be, because you have carefully looked into the topic, and discovered the magnitude and multitude of its points ; but the only conception of the topic which your congregation have, is that which you give them in that sermon which seems to you so disemboweled, for brevity's sake. It is not disemboweled, to them. No one has any sense of loss when he does not know that he has lost anything. I have missed hundreds of things in life which I might have had, and it was necessary to the ideal fullness of my life that they should come into it ; but my life seems now about as full as I can stand, and, not having heard generally what those things are which have escaped me, I do not pine. Neither do your listeners pine, O preacher, for anything you left out—not ordinarily. We torment ourselves too much at this point.

Consider also that a genuine sermon, though it be but twenty minutes long, has in it all the essential juices of the subject which it

expounds. Tap one sugar maple, and you have the entire secret of maple sap. You do not need to drink the whole grove dry, nor even the one tree.

The truly divine subjects that belong in sermons, do all curiously cohere, one with another, and are nourished by the same essential circulation. Let a real preacher preach on election, and his people will have a cup from the Gospel spring. Let him preach on Hell, and they will taste the same waters. And if that is so, much more plainly is it true that any one theme, fragmentarily stated, because there is not time to state it entirely, will have the authentic taste of the whole great theme. I continually increase in my sense of the sufficiency of brief statements in the pulpit, so that they be direct, swift-moving, out of the warm interiors of the subject in hand, and not from its outskirts; and, further, contagious with the personal energy of a man who is in his subject, and has his subject in him, by good study of it, by the Holy Ghost, and by an experience which makes him absolutely know what he is talking about.

I am speaking, you will understand, of the preaching which we are called to give our people, Sunday by Sunday, and year by year. Sometimes we are called to open matters to the bottom sands, and from shore to shore, as where St. Paul preached all night, or where Jesus prolonged his last passover utterance till the moon, the dear Paschal moon, was far on in the sky, and the night well spent. When the occasion demands it, or even when our own divine irrepressibility demands it, we will not fear a long pull; some may not be willing to listen (one man fell asleep when Paul preached that time), but others some will listen, as being able to see the movement of God in us, and the glory of his message through us.

Gentlemen, to-day for the first time, I have spoken to you less than an hour, and I am therefore a beautiful illustration of my own subject.

## EXTRA-PARISHIONAL FAITHFULNESS.

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I wish I might give to the young men present something of my own sense of the importance to them, to the churches of which they may be pastors, to the denomination in which they may stand, and to the general cause of Christ, that they each one attend, faithfully and cordially, the rather numerous convocations, conferences, associations, consociations, ministers' meetings, councils, and general councils, to which they will find themselves related, as they pass on in their ministry. Time was when I should have been a very unsuitable lecturer to you on this subject, because I did not appreciate these extra-parishional obligations and privileges, and sinned against them with a high hand and an outstretched arm—doing it deliberately, and because my ideas about such things were wrong. But, now, I do so plainly see that they were wrong, and have been so ashamed of them for a good while, that I consider myself to have great qualifications for speaking to you, and exhorting you, and giving you a right trend, here at the start of your clerical career.

Now why did I, when I started, eschew these wholesome assemblies? If I say, I did it because I was a fool, that would be the truth, but not the whole truth. I was shy. I dreaded to meet men and exchange opinions with them. Shy, I say. Shy about everything in fact. When Dr. Fitch resigned the pastorate of Yale College, and the next Alumni meeting was considering that notable event, I heard one of the speakers say :—" It was once asked how in the world a man so scandalously timid as the doctor, ever raised courage to accept such a position as that ; and the reply was, because he was too timid to reject it." Well, I understood that remark.

And, young gentlemen, perhaps I had better drop in a parenthesis here, and tell you, out of my own experience, that the fear of man can be considerably outgrown by ministers. What you are compelled to do, you can do—and keep doing, and gradually men and assemblies are not so clothed with terrors as they used to be—that is, provided you have a sufficiently obstinate will, and also a physique that does not miserably give way under you when you lay a strain on it. The legs of a certain marshal of Napoleon the Great, always trembled on the edge of battle in the most unedifying manner, we are told; but he never paid any attention to them, he said. “He gave them their own sweet way, and while they trembled he fought.” Not all legs of men will stand such treatment as that, but most will, if they are edged along and humored a little. A friend and relative of mine, facing his first considerable assembly, became blind and felt his neck shortening down to his shoulders, and had to be led off and never became an orator; but ministers are not out before assemblies on business of their own, they being divine ambassadors; and that sense of mission would keep the tiniest boat, head on to any gale. Moreover, it is a curious fact that often a soul, constitutionally timorous in the presence of the private man, loses all that when those private persons are massed before him a thousand strong to be addressed. The speaker seems to pass out then into the grandeur of impersonal considerations, and in the enthusiasm of them he is sublimed and fear has no hold on him.

Thus much on ministerial courage, my young and apprehensive brothers.

I abjured convocations for fear's sake, I was saying. Also I abjured clerical bodies, because I did not rightly esteem ministers. I had somehow picked up that precious piece of misunderstanding and practical slander, which has latterly had some special ventilation in the public prints; the notion that preachers, as a class, do not frankly speak their minds on the great matters of doctrine and religion, but put themselves before the public as more all-believing persons than they really are; declaring, oftentimes, what they are expected to declare, or think they ought to declare, rather than exactly what they are able to see and rest in, and live for, and stake their eternity on.

Well, beloved, I have come out of that, and I wish you would take my word for it, that ministers are no such second-class and time-serving men of God as such talk implies. My discovery in

regard to them is, that while they are earthen vessels, and had better be—so long as they are ministers—even as the Eternal Son of God, when he would serve men, took on himself their nature, and many of its infirmities—nevertheless those earthen vessels are not so earthen as to be good for nothing ; but are of the better sort, decidedly. They are honest. They are frank—just as frank as honesty requires. They are magnanimous. They are brotherly—with each other, and with all men. They are truth-seekers and lovers. They are intelligent and candid. They are clean in their lives. They are gentlemanly. They are conversational and agreeable. They show well in emergencies, and are able to be martyrs. They are well-informed. They are fitted for the leaderships of all sorts to which they are called. I will not be choked down by any modesty in this matter. Neither in this lecture will I be choked, nor in conventions of lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or women, or anybody else ;—we have no need to fear any of them, and, my brother, if ever you fall to thinking of your own demerits, and your own insignificance, and get so shame-faced that you are tempted to make a slack testimony for your order before a wicked and gainsaying world, do you impute to yourself the merits of the better members of the order, long enough to deliver a rousing testimony. For the men in question deserve it,—visibly they do ; and then, if they be looked into historically—that is, along all the nobler lines of history, it will be found that society and government, and all welfares, have been as much indebted to them as to any one.

After this preliminary skirmish of mine, you are prepared, I hope, to go on with me, while I draw out in form, some of the reasons why you should be very duty-full towards church and clerical assemblies. You will notice that I speak as a Congregational minister, considerably, as I reasonably may before a body of men, the most of whom are likely to serve in the Congregational field. The principles, however, which I lay down, apply equally well to all Christian communions.

First, then, observe ; if Congregationalism—as distinguished from Independency—is to exist, it must be by denominational convocations ; these are the forms and the means of corporate life and, if they are kept up, somebody must keep them up ; and if somebody must, why not you, A, B, and C ? It is as much your business as it is mine. On the question whether Congregationalism ought to



exist, I will not argue. Independency is impracticable, in regard of the great ends of Christian propagandism ; and, in the last analysis, it is contrary to the Christian Spirit. When I was remarking on my own aversion to convictions originally, I forgot to say, that I had nursed myself along into the solitariness and repellancy of Individualism. I thought a man's religion and his religious opinions were a matter between himself and his God, and did not admit of intermeddlers. I even declined church membership for a time, being afraid that the clear lines of my own personality might get confused, and I suffer some mergence in other people if I joined myself to anything. You will detect the kernel of truth in my position ; a man must maintain himself an unmistakable integer ; coherence and cohesion, and the agglutinous instinct may be carried clear to the point of self-loss ;—and local churches may agglutinate inordinately, and bring up in an impersonal corporeity, national, provincial or other ; and yet Individualism, pure and simple, is indefensible abstractly, and when it is brought to the proof of experiment, it shows itself the quintessence and first principle of disorganization and anarchy.

We must get together. then, in many kinds of assemblies. There must be councils, conferences, associations, synods, general conventions, and the like. These various congresses have duties to perform, that are indispensable to the general life. Duties to perform. Young men who surmise that they are right for ministers, must be inspected unto the uttermost. Churches which surmise that they have hit on a right minister for themselves, must be advised ;—sometimes that they have, and sometimes that they have not ; and sometimes that they both have and have not. Disorderliness must be advised. Heterodoxy must be labored with and voted on. Great questions of morals must have a more than individual yea or nay pronounced on them. Ecclesiastical precedents must be made. Many things must be thrown into the mill of a national handling, in general assemblies, in order that what is wide-afloat in single minds may get formulated in a formulation of size enough to be visible and ponderous ;—it is astonishing to what a ripeness the general mind may come by the separate and scattered gestations of large numbers of private minds ; and yet have no consciousness of it until some general body meets and makes a deliverance. It is like an orchard which is red-ripe, all through, but needs a good general wind to shake it down and make all beholders see

that the day of completeness has come. By these means Individualism is Christianized into Catholicism, self-consciousness into consciousness corporate, localism into universalism, bush-fighting into regiments, brigades, and divisions, preaching alone, into a conscious voicing of the whole church of God, creed-saying, a ripple here and a splash there, into the sound of many waters, and the august emphasis of all generations.

Go to the councils then, and the meetings, and the regular conventions, and whatever else may be provided for you to take a hand in. Councils get joked in these days as self-conceited and pompous futilities, but these jokers know not what they say. It does expand a man's self-consciousness to be a councilman, and he may even go so far as pomposity in certain cases ; but as to these bodies being futilities, that is not so. In the Roman communion, certainly, they are not ; and even in a communion so intensely individualistic as the Congregational, councils are yet capable of making a good deal of trouble, for those that deserve it, and much good for those who deserve that ;—as you will find if you go to all you are ever called to. Go to them, I say, once more. Do your duty ;—your denominational duty, and your inter-denominational duty,—and your international duty, if you should ever get appointed Christ's delegate to other lands. And your own people must let you spread out on these. They will be wanting a council themselves some day. And if the principle of shirking gets shed abroad among ministers, how will councils and the rest be made up ?

My second reason for faithfulness to your corporate obligations, is, that if you decline them, and just converge yourself upon your parish work, and there stick year after year, it narrows you, both your views, and your feelings. It may make you conceited as to "your parish," "your congregation," "your people," "your pulpit," "and your Sunday school," or it may, on the other hand, weaken your hopefulness and your courage, and slacken the energy of your stroke. I judge that this localization of one's self, works in the direction of conceit as often as any way, I thought of that while conversing with a Protestant Episcopal clergyman, all worn out because he did not dare leave his pulpit for a moment (he said) lest some ministerial brother coming in there might, in a single sermon, wipe out his months of careful labor on a class which he was preparing for confirmation. Perhaps your first impulse on hearing such talk as that is to admire the man's devotion. Certainly

that confirmation class was well followed up, and I presume they were nourished on substantial truths ;—but one's second thought is, that they were followed and nourished by a man so intensely specialized as to have lost his breadth, and his bigness ;—and always in teaching, the teacher is quite as much as his doctrine. He was not so important to that class as he thought. Thousands of clergymen could have handled them as well as he. He was so much of a parish minister that he was nothing else. He had so few outings that he misestimated his ministerial brethren. He did not know the kind of sermons they were preaching. He mismeasured the importance of that class of his. It was very important, but there are such classes without number all over the world ; and there are other congregations, all about, and while the particular must not be undervalued, the general is surely more than the particular ;—and no man can make any just judgment on anything, unless he is conversant with generals. Moreover, while a home-staying, and home-laboring minister, runs a risk of being thus made small and full of a puffy estimate of his own services, his congregation, on their part, may suffer in the same way. If their minister circulated widely, in the various assemblies of his denomination, and of other denominations, he would bring in wafts from those outlying regions ; bits of information, movements of sympathy, intelligent judgments of his own, founded on this wide survey of his ;—and by all this, that particular people, while remaining sensible of themselves, would be made sensible of the rest of the creation ; would like to hear other ministers, and would run the risk of ruining a confirmation class ; would consider that a religious service was not spoiled if their minister was absent for once ; and, speaking generally, would get a valid gauge on their own selves and their own labors, and affairs. But their minister declines to circulate, does not feel the need of a wide contact with Christendom through its many characteristic assemblies, thinks it takes too much time to attend to these things, and that his local duties are all he can carry ;—so, while he is circumscribed and belittled, and at the same time is dilated in self-importance, they run into the same infirmities.

I want to speak a word concerning the enheartenment which one may get by an extended familiarity with Zion at large. One Monday morning in 1872, I boarded a train bound from London to Liverpool to take ship for home, and I found myself facing an old man, who proved to be a clergyman and an American. Were you in

London, yesterday? said I. Yes. And where did you attend church? At Mr. Spurgeon's. Did you hear that sermon of his in the morning, from the text: "He is a root out of a dry ground." Yes. And what did you think of it? Thereupon he was so filled with emotion that he could not reply. But his wife took it up, and said:—We cried all the way through it. And why did you cry? said I. Then it came out, at last, that he had been a missionary in Turkey all his life, and to come up now, as he had within a few days, out of Turkish surroundings, and all the depressions thereof, where there is not one Christian to a hundred square miles, and get into that immense assembly with its immense unity in the Holy Ghost, and hear them singing in a great swing like the final hallelujahs of the redeemed; and then to hear that truly wonderful discourse (and I think it was wonderful, and I shall never lose the sound of it), in which, point after point, it was shown wherein Christ was a root out of dry ground, but was also shown how this unpromising One had made his victories, and was on his way to a kingdom that shall fill the whole earth,—why! it was more than the old man's heart could endure;—he overflowed—he took the occasion up imaginatively, after the manner of high feeling always, and made it signify and seem the ultimate unity of man in the blessed Jesus, according to that grand sentence of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the first chapter, and the sixteenth verse: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." In the seership of that sentence, the man sat and wept, while the great service went on. And I myself have often felt a similar enlargement and a similar joy. Even under circumstances so disadvantageous as a high service in St. Peter's at Rome, I have been able to rise into a sort of Millennial feeling. The mighty multitude, made up of all lands and all nationalities, and all ranks, under the whole heaven; the jubilate of choirs reduplicated through the echoing great spaces of the cathedral, and even the spectacular elements of the occasion, were woven together into a vision, I found, of Christianity universalized and triumphant, fulfilling what I read afterwards on the base-stone of the Egyptian obelisk that had been set up in the great square in front of the church, and surmounted by a cross, namely:—"Behold the cross of the Lord—lo! the Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered." Tugging forever in my own parish, looking out forever

on my one comparatively little congregation, and seeing only such minute results of labor as are possible to a single man on a single spot, my sense of the majesty of Christianity, and its dominion, prospectively as well as to-day, may slip away from me a little ; but when I walk about Zion and survey her towers and catch the uplift and hosannah of her masses, multitudes, and millions, I am restored to the largeness that belongs to me. I have comprehension and vision. I have insight and foresight and sight all around.

It is not every day we can get into these ecumenical and vast meetings, and have our idea of what Christendom is, and what Christianity means thus suddenly enlarged, and made transporting ; but you can accomplish something of the same sort by slow degrees, in frequenting many kinds of lesser meetings. In a gathering of the ministers of a city, on Monday morning, with an inter-mixture of Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, and about everything you can think of, each one ready to make an argument for his specialism, and all ready, also, to flow into the one grand current of undenominational thought, the occasion works beautifully to pull you out of localism, and out of all your special rages, and make you a sizable and round-a-bout man. I attended a May meeting of the Quakers in New York, years ago, and came away with a renewed sense of several things whereof my own parish might not have reminded me in forty years. I attended every session of a Methodist annual conference that met in my city once, and had restored to me considerably the days of my youth, when I was familiar with the Methodistic stride, and did not know but I was myself foreordained to that movement all the days of my life. It is good to take another man's gait sometimes. It advises you that several gaits are possible, and several legitimate, and that there are several, of which one is substantially as good as the other. A friend of mine with me in Europe, accompanied me to the service of a certain eccentric communion (as he would call it), and some things done by them seemed very amusing and ridiculous to him. Well, they were not amusing and they were not ridiculous. He was stiff-jointed by a life-long tread-milling in Congregationalism, and was not equal to the versatile movements of that truly beautiful and very plausible ritual.

It does a man good even to exchange pulpits, once in a while. He sees how Israel looks in all kinds of costumes. He manifolds his conception of church edifices, and choirs and liturgies. He



learns how possible it is to preach in unprecedented pulpits. He comes home a limberer and a wiser man, and walks into his work again with a certain catholicity.

Great contact with Christians in your own body, and Christians at large, is a rich re-enforcement of your doctrinal feeling also. The divisions of Christendom are numerous, but the concords of Christendom are more. I do not know that they are more numerically, and I do not care. You cannot measure things by count. Lilliput counts one, Cæsar counts one and one only. The true measures are moral, and the unanimity of the Christian world on the great momenta of faith, utterly drowns out all discords, if only you have an ear to hear. Standing on a rocky sea coast, the shatter of the waves might fully fill your ear; but how light is mere shattering compared to that one grave, and immense ocean-tone which eternally fills the whole sky. Thus open your ear to the tone of the ages, as with unvarying unanimity they speak forth the great facts and formulations of our faith, and all lesser sounds are silenced, and you feel yourself re-established in the mighty main things. And the way to get your ear open is to attend assemblies. I have often felt, in the general meetings of the Christian body to which I belong, that I wanted the assembled brethren to stand up every time in some grand creed-saying, in which they could all agree; some creed, too, in which the general church always has agreed, so that voices absent might be added to voices present, and the innumerable departed might strike in with the living—what an edification it would be! how we should be doctrinalized afresh! for we are creatures of sense, and what is spoken seems authenticated by being spoken, especially if, in the speaking, all redeemed voices combine.

Again, be sure to frequent all legitimate meetings, for numerous little reasons, such as the following: It is something, to put your eyes on the men of celebrity, and the good men, whom you are likely to meet there. It is a fine thing for young men to have heroes—and for old ones, too—theological heroes—heroes of reform—men of great and admirable learning—men of noble eloquence—men of great endowments of magnetism. The advance of years tends to lessen one's heroes, I suppose;—some heroes it quite obliterates, and others it reduces; and some sad and disagreeable old men confess that they have no admirations left—poor old creatures! I say to you, there is no need of these wholesale disenchantments. I am old enough to know,

and I say it. I do not know how many men there are whom I would go thousands of miles to see and hear, and feel the touch of their vigor. I see their limitations, but I see also where they round out towards the infinite. They represent to me the better forms of strength, and the better forms of virtue ;—they represent to me, in short, those great abstract truths, principles, and virtues, which are the enthusiasm of life ; and they represent them in that way which is most impressive to all men ; namely, as personalized, and lived out. So, Jesus could say :—" I am the Truth and the Life ;" and His victory lay in His incarnation of these great things. And some other men, in their measure, and with a difference, can say the same thing. And we like to look at those men ; it is a miserable day for us when we do not like to. My memory is full of such meetings, and it always gladdens me and strengthens me to recall them.

Moreover, let me say to you, privately, it may be much practical advantage to you some day to know, and be known, by these men and brethren whom you meet—say, in the assemblies of your own denomination. Young men have their difficulties, in which they need assistance and protection. They have entanglements in their parishes, controversies and contentions against which they cannot make head, self-sufficient and uninspired deacons (though I am obliged to say that deacons are a maligned class—they average excellently well) ; but sometimes a monstrous one will spring up, and then a young minister needs some old, bulky, herculean brother-minister in whom to hide himself. Yes, often, the beginners need help in their parishes.

Or they come into perturbations and uncertainties of thought. Or they go so far as to adopt opinions which they suppose to be inharmonious with the current doctrine of their sect ; and then they grow self-conscious and unhappy. The more peculiar they seem to themselves, the more disinclined are they to move about freely among their brethren, and you never see them in the general assemblies. They are afraid. They feel themselves black sheep, and they have the touchiness of all black sheep. If any one makes a shy at them they do not think it is humor, but a dig at their peculiarities. And there is no telling into what retirement and misery and explosiveness they may go at last. Probably it will occur to them that they must leave their denomination, and see if they cannot find better adjustments somewhere else ;—and they even wish

they were out of the pulpit, for good and all. I have more than once seen men of this sort. And more often still, I have noticed young men who were putting forth the first symptoms of this unhappy state.

Well, the remedy for this—if it has not already passed beyond remedy—one remedy at any rate, and as good as any other, is to mingle much in the assemblies, and rub against other men—and to take counsel of the principal men, perhaps privately, or more likely in public discussions, where they may be heard expressing themselves. As likely as not you will find that you are not the utterly eccentric person you had supposed. Other men have thoughts as well as you, and they know the wrench of doubt, and the daze of a man when he does not see how the conclusions whereat he has arrived can be harmonized with the standards.

These matured and broad-shouldered men whom I am recommending to you in your predicaments, have succeeded in extracting from life several precious bits of wisdom. They have learned how to manage a parish, so that now it would be a very monstrous deacon that could unhorse them. They have learned how to cherish numerous views of their own, without inflicting them on their people, or on their denomination; or striving to make them agree with the standards or the standards with them. Standards, if they are fit to exist, are as celebrated for their omissions as for their affirmations—and the whole, large field of their omissions, is left for the private thinker to expatiate in, and indulge his idiosyncracies. Moreover, these mature brethren have discovered that even the great points of Catholic doctrine, the glorious indisputables of the Christian church, may be held by the private thinker in their substance, while he makes pretty free with their form. Now, the substance of the Atonement of the Lord Jesus is, that He interposed between man and God in such a way and in such travail of soul, that all difficulties, whatever they were, by which God was hindered, and could not pardon and save men, were utterly and forever taken away;—but that magnificent generosity which is enough to melt all human hearts, has been reduced in some creeds to a much more particularized statement (whether true or not), which is not scripturally binding on the faith of anybody, and is to be subscribed to, if subscribed at all, only out of respect to that underlying great truth just mentioned. What the creed is after is just that, and I believe in the creed because it is after that; and as to its specific forms of conception for that infinite, its patented

abridgements of it, I will not quarrel with them, any more than I will with its use of this or that single word in its effort to get out what it plainly intends; as, *but for nevertheless*, or, *nevertheless for but*. There are various ways of getting one's liberty in this awful world;—and old men have found that out. There is no need to secrete yourself within the confines of your own parish, and feel sore and scared, and never go anywhere, and by and by get yourself off into some other vocation, because you are such a black sheep. Come up to the meetings. Confer with the chief men who have earned the right to speak by authority. Listen to their essays. Listen to their unconsidered outgushings when they are excited, and under excitement let out the whole truth. Ask them privately for some history of the development of their own opinions. And when they get through, ask them if they think it is right to hold such a budget of views that they never mention, and hear every man of them say yes. Young men—and it is sweet in them—conceive that it is not frank and honest not to make an exposition of your entire interior so often as you can get a chance, and especially before councils, who have come together on purpose to ravage said interiors; but, Brethren, all that councils, or anything else, have a right to know about you, are those views in your circle of views that are determinative essentially of your spirit and character; and, which introduced into your preaching, will be determinative of the spirit and character of the people who listen to you. At any rate, come up to the meetings. That is my refrain.

It may be, that you have gone into some off-color movement of thought, that is really and substantially unorthodox. Well, come up to the meetings and let us look you over. Perhaps you are worth saving. Perhaps if you can be protected a few years, and have your freedom, you will be able to come out where we would all like to have you. And there are men among us who can protect you. Our annals are pretty full of instances like that. When a certain friend of mine, then a boy, was installed pastor of a certain church in a city hard by, where he still is after some twenty-four years of continuous service, certain councilmen voted against his orthodoxy; and the case went into the public journals; whereupon, an old and eminently orthodox man, pastor for a lifetime of a neighbor-church in that city, came to his deliverance, and put the entire weight of his venerable authority in for a bulwark around the young man. And his unabated old age stirred itself up into a

lovely indignation on the subject. Whether my friend's solid twenty odd years have vindicated the defence then made for him, judge ye. But I want you to see that young men had better know the old ones, and have the old ones know them. The above-mentioned grizzled warrior fired up, and opened his guns, because in a protracted council he had arrived at some knowledge of the young man;—and perhaps his youth reminded him of his own days of youth, and made him tender and easy to be drawn into an honest quarrel.

So, go to the councils, to the associations, and the general associations, and the conferences, and the church congresses, and whatever is up. If you are worth defending, you will be defended. And if you need straightening out before you can be defended very much, why, the meetings of the Brethren are good for that. There is nothing that enables one to see his own views about as they are, more than to toss them out into assemblies, and watch the men there battle-door them about. Opinions are valid or not, according as they will stand battle-dooring. When I left this Seminary, I understood the introduction of moral evil into this universe, first-rate and perfectly. I had a way of putting the subject which I considered iron-clad, and was willing to put into action in any company. But, pretty soon, I put it in, in a debate with a Methodist layman, a man prone to tender-hearted views, but intelligent withal; and he made a single remark, which I thought and have thought ever since made an utter ruin of my iron-clad. Men can do such things for us. Common men can. There is not an uneducated day-laborer in New England—so that he has native sense—who may not be a good person to try your theology upon and see what he says about it. You do not believe in Materialism. Well, go and talk with the Materialists. You have rigged a pretty boat of your own, full-sailed, full-sparred, shapely, and flag at high mast; now send her to sea, and let the Materialists blow on her with all their winds;—not by printed essays, and formal volumes (all that you have looked into, every leaf, before you made your boat), but by arguments, face to face, and by conversations, and the whirl of general debate. In that free way all points are hit, and all the lights and shades of things are brought out as they never are in books.

Clarify your opinions then in the gatherings of your brethren. Give them a chance to sift them for you. They are experts.



Certain ancient bones, which had been dug up years ago, went wandering around the earth to have some man identify them as belonging to this or that animal ; and no one knew them ; even Hugh Miller could not tell ; but at last they found their prophet in Professor Agassiz, who recognized them directly. So much for having Agassiz to carry our bones to ;—and so much for having the sense to carry them. Go to your wise men with your notions, my Brother. Go to the conventions, where you can find them. Go to the councils, where their wisdom is likely to come out.

And much acquaintance with the brethren, makes them valuable to you in many other ways. When you want a new parish they will help you ;—and how can they help you to much purpose, if they have never had an opportunity to sample you ? When you want formal advice on some personal matter, or some matter ecclesiastical, they will be glad to obey your call on them, and come to you, and put their sympathetic minds into your case. Yes, this guild of ours is one of the best. Close-knit, manly, tender, and true, are the ties that bind our men together, when we know each other, have exchanged pulpits, have worked along side and man to man, have stirred up conventions together, have gone out in the Autumn, as a general conference, quartering ourselves for days on the unresisting inhabitants, have fought each other in councils, and, in the midst of all, have kept up the flow of our love feasts.

And speaking of love feasts, reminds me that I intended to make a whole separate fifth head, on the kindliness engendered among ministers by the meetings they have ;—which kindliness, while it is enjoyable, very, as a mere feeling, works out also into many utilities. I have said as much, but I have some other thoughts in my mind about it. For, instance, how personal contact leads on to esteem and affection for those who are opposed to you theologically, and who have been a little disagreeable to you on that account, as likely as not. Or, something else has made them disagreeable. You have heard things about them ;—that they are combative—that they cannot preach much—that they gush—that they are inexact thinkers—or fanatical reformers—or voluble—or ambitious. Many things get afloat, first and last, taking all ministers together, and the first movement of the depraved human intellect is to generalize upon the whole man from a single unpleasant bit of information like that. Perhaps that single thing is all you know about him. Some twenty or more years ago, a woman where I went

to preach refused to go to the church, because I was a Sabbath-breaker, she said. All I did, in those days, was to take a walk Sunday afternoons, which I must take or burst, I usually had so much steam on. Moreover, she ought to have recollected my numerous virtues, and she would have done it if I could have made her acquaintance. I shall never forget the first time I saw William Lloyd Garrison, and heard him speak. He was a much more lamb-like man in his face than I expected to see, and more mild-voiced, and more considerate, in fact, in what he said. I had imputed to his person the deformity (as I thought it) of his political opinions. I fancy that many persons were similarly surprised when they first met in private the late Dr. Leonard Bacon, and felt the suffusion of his geniality and his uncontentious utterance, and his humor and sparkle. All they had known was the pound of his trip-hammer movements against slavery, and other nefarious things. They had not been told that his heaven-shaking hammerings, were made to be the sounding and awful things they were, by the great heart that was in him ;—a heart that did not often cry, but saved itself for those strokes of Thor.

It is best to meet men, and size them on all sides, and take a taste of all their qualities. Then, most likely, you cannot hate them if you want to. The earnest theology of Father Taylor, the celebrated sailors' preacher in Boston (it is an old story), had led him to locate Ralph Waldo Emerson in a future Hell ; but when he had met him, and felt his pulse, he did not know where to put him ; he said, Emerson's opinions kept him out of Heaven, and his good character kept him out of Hell, and there did not seem to be any place for him ; though it was evident that Taylor was in danger of landing him in Heaven, notwithstanding all his Paganism, Pantheism, and big-headed Jupiter-like dubiousness. Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, in his biography of his father, gives some account of a dear old Scotch clergyman, his Uncle Ebenezer, who was shaken from his foundations one day, a little as Father Taylor was. In his not strong old age, he started across the open country, on his pony, in a heavy snow storm, to fulfill an engagement to preach. Nobody could dissuade him, and he went. And he tumbled over at last, pony and all, and was wallowing in his helplessness, when there happened along some rude fellows carting whiskey to the town. And they tugged him up and lifted the pony, and put the old man on, and dusted off the snow, and ran for

a drink of the whiskey for him, which he swallowed gratefully, and made a downright tender time over him, rough creatures and wicked though they were. "Next presbytery day" (says Dr. Brown) "after the ordinary business was over, Uncle Ebenezer rose up (he seldom spoke) and said :—Moderator, I have something personal to myself to say. I have often said that real kindness belongs only to true Christians, but (and then he told the story of those men) more true kindness I never experienced than from those lads. They may have had the grace of God, I don't know ; but I never mean again to be so positive in speaking of this matter." Well, that is the effect of knowing people. It is easy to reason on the wavering of Father Taylor and Uncle Ebenezer, and prove that this talk of theirs was mere weakness, and that if meeting men leads to compromising one eternal truth in that manner, we were better not to meet them ;—and the less assemblies we have the better—assemblies, that is, where various theologies are mixed together. Let Old School Calvinists meet only Old School men, and New School men their sort, and Armenians their sort, and let ministers who do not know what they do think, have assemblies of their own and enjoy their own confusion. That seems sensible, perhaps, but not very, to my mind. A theology that does not include all the plain facts of the creation, as Uncle Ebenezer's did not, had better be rolled about on a snowy moor, and receive gifts of comfortable whiskey from the sons of Satan ;—and a theology which does include all facts, had better meet in convention, and council, the theologies that do not, in order that it may learn to hold the truth in love, by being made to love, personally, the false theologians. There is no need to surrender anything. It never makes any impression on me, to meet an Old School Calvinist—that I could ever see—except that, loving him, as I am generally forced to, I take on a habit of stating my own theology with the air of a man who has heard from the other side, and knows that there are Old School errorists in the world. In the *North American Review* some time since, Robert Ingersoll made a deliverance on and against Christianity, which called out an article in reply from Judge Black ; and then Ingersoll spoke again, and then there came a word from your own Professor Fisher. And I know of no better example of right and wrong polemics, in respect of touchiness, dogmatism, and personal animosity, than those two pro-Christian articles. Both of those writers show distinctly that they have heard from the other side, to wit—from Mr. Ingersoll ;—

they both stand front-face to that man, but, O ! the difference in the faces ! One was almost enough to make Ingersoll glad he is a Pagan, and the other ought to make him a Christian. Not merely is the intellectual weight of the professor's statement very great, but there is not a flush of emotion throughout the whole which could not be conscientiously and gladly undersigned by all Christendom ; and Ingersoll himself could not help loving the man who took his life so Christianly.

Now, my thought is that contrary kinds of men be thrown together as much as may be, in order that under the persuasion of each other's perceived good qualities, they may not sacrifice their principles, but maintain them with a certain lenitude. There is no more real push in a battering ram than there is in a Spring sun. The ram would pulverize ice effectually, but so would the sun; and there would be so much cushion in the push of the sun, as to make the ice almost happy to die under the pressure.

And, after all, Brethren, the whole end of Theology is love. It seems hard to realize that that is so, but so it is. If your theology does not make you loving, it has not Christianized you, and to that extent is not a Christian theology. All ecclesiasticism, and all doctrinalizing, is in order to character, and the soul of character is love. Preach the truth in love, and for the development of love. Go to the assemblies of your brethren, for love's sake. In some cases seeing a man may make you dislike him, but I do not think it works so with ministers, as a rule. While I write this sentence, I am trying to think of a minister whom I know well, that I really and rather totally dislike—and I have not recalled one yet. Robert Burns wrote an address to the Devil, which ends up with the following bewitching touch of benevolence. Burns had spent some nineteen verses, giving his Majesty a plain statement of his mean opinion of him, ending with this irreverent snapper :

An' now, auld *Cloots* I ken ye're thinkin  
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin,  
Some luckless hour will send him linkin,  
To your black pit :  
But, faith ! he'll turn a corner jinkin,  
And cheat you yet.

But, suddenly now, from that height of impiety the Bardie drops to this flow of the heart :

But, fare you weel, auld *Nickie-ben* !  
O wad ye tak a thought an' men' !  
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—  
Still hae a *stake*—  
I'm wae to think upo' yon den,  
Ev'n for your sake !

It seems to me that we ministers had better keep going to assemblies until we have just about that feeling towards the most questionable of the brethren. Attack their errors, rebuke their faults, lay on and spare not. Do not fail to see the false opinions of ministers and other Christians, and their erroneous practices, and the flaws and disproportions which make them imperfect in character ; but, and at the same time, be lenient and accept them, in the large receptivity of love, even as God, for Christ's sake, has excepted both them and you.



## PARISH INCONVENIENCES.

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I shall lecture to-day on what I call Parish Inconveniences, using a mild term in order not to frighten you too much at first. And as there are a good many of these inconveniences to be mentioned, I will plunge into their midst as soon as possible, and call your attention, in the first place, to the great subject of small salaries :—a subject on which my views have greatly changed since I was first compelled to take an interest in it, long years ago. I do not know but a little income seems little to me even yet (I wish it did not,) but my feeling about such a thing for ministers is certainly different ; and of course I want to impart to you, that different, and wiser, and less depressed state of mind.

When I went out into the Christian Ministry, I was not very hilarious in regard to this whole business of the money. I had not the least ambition to grow rich ;—I gave that up totally when I consented within myself to this special Christian service, and when a bright lady in New Haven said to me, then a theological student there,—“I had as lief take a ticket to the poor-house as to marry a minister,” I could not deny that there was a certain show of soundness in her. I expected to be poor, and was willing to be. That did not deject me. But I had been led to expect to be worse than merely poor. I thought I might be indecently poor. I thought that a great many churches were willing their ministers should be indecently poor, and miserable. I did not see why I might not strike on just such a people as that. A young man, looking out on life, that practical unknown, is easily impressed and needs chirking, I found. Whereas, just at that time, certain books had come out, in which the shady side of ministerial experience—especially the financial side—was presented with a pre-raphaelite realism and vigor quite appalling. Those books I read, marked, learned, and

inwardly digested, as the Liturgy says, and believed in. And I suppose now that they told the truth, though they by no means rose to the full height of a witnesses oath :—"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

In addition to these books, for a comfort, I had some recollection of my father's pastorates when I was a young thing and followed His fortunes while he circulated about the country as an itinerant Methodist. As a boy, I contemplated the ministry in its utilitarian aspects in the main, and when my clothes were not as expensive as I would have liked, and my spending money was limited, and when my father had offers from well-to-do childless women to adopt me for their own, I charged the whole thing on the parishes that we served, and thought they were mean. I now see that we were in less want than I thought, and that the parishes were not mean ; but so far back as that great day when I stepped forth from this Yale School of Divinity, those early prejudices still lingered with me and assisted the melancholy books just mentioned to get an exaggerated hold upon me.

I tell you those things, my friends, because you are where I once was—that is, about to begin life—and may be tried by feelings similar to mine, and I want to give you my later, and more mature and final views on this matter, as fitted perhaps to head off any downheartedness on your part as you survey the years to come.

Now, I shall admit at the outset, that you must not look to make money in the Christian Ministry ;—for the following plain reasons. First, your income will not be large enough for that, especially as you will, every man of you, see the divine beauty of the early, but never-obsolete scripture :—"It is not good for Man to be alone,"—and proceed to be married so soon as possible. I have often thought it would be good to have a celibate class in the ranks of our Protestant Ministry, with a view to service in feeble parishes—temporary celibates—but it is a plain case that we cannot have them. So ministers cannot make money. Their wives and their other luxuries will keep them right up to the limits of their limited resources. Next, you will not be parsimonious enough to make money on your moderate income—I hope. Next, you will not be sufficiently worldly-wise. You will be piously absorbed in your subjects, and your parochial work, and what knack for business you may have by inheritance from thrifty and managing ancestors, will gradually die out of you, probably—until you have only head

enough left to draw your salary and pay your debts. Of course, once in a while there comes up a minister who defies all these rules, and stores away some money;—he is very saving and watchful, and his wife does a world of hard work, and all his weaned children are turned to immediate use, and he does not squander anything on philanthropies—or possibly nothing can kill out of him a natural aptitude for infallible investments, so that his minute savings swell, as by an inherent and irresistible expansibility of their own; but men of this stamp are rather the exception in our profession, and most likely none of you will ever be rich;—unless you have been born so. And if you have, I am not sure that it will be any benefit to you.

But be not alarmed;—you will not starve. In other pursuits men do, but somehow in ours they do not. The raft is the type of our condition; it is a very wet thing, but it never sinks. Ships do—the bravest of them. You may serve most poverty-stricken parishes, but you will never starve. I never saw the day when my father's table was not more than sufficiently supplied. I never sat at a minister's table which did not have on it more than anyone needed. The most meagre one I ever did see—it had such humble signs about it that I felt glad to move on and relieve my kindly host—was the board of a man with flesh on his bones enough to bring his weight to the substantial figure of two-hundred pounds and over; so that, after all, he could not have been much cramped.

If you happen to become the Minister of a people who are decidedly indigent, they will at least be sure to keep you as well as they keep themselves, and if they live, you can. Yes, they will try to keep you a little better, out of that respect and love for your holy office, which is as strong in a poor man's heart as in anybody's. And, Brethren, it is curious how comfortable one can be on an uncomfortable salary. I was once reduced to living on potatoes,—and even they were carefully counted out, our supply was so small. But I suffered no hurt,—neither did any of my party. Some of them grumbled, but it was ridiculous. It does us good to get down to the simplicities of life, and see exactly what human nature needs. More than potatoes, in the long run, I suppose physiology would say, but ministers always do have more than that. My first salary was eight hundred dollars, but I was as well supplied as I am now on six times the amount. Because I had not the wants that I now have. And if I had been kept to eight hundred, I never should have

had the wants—many of them. It would hurt me now to be squeezed back into eight hundred. I have sprouted far and wide since then—a sort of banyan tree—and that original pot would not hold me ; but I could have lived without sprouting, if I had had to ; and I presume now that some day I shall be called to lop off, and lop off, to even less than those original dimensions. And if I am, it is in likelihood that I shall feel like a tree that has been trimmed, or like a man who has lost his legs. The trimmed tree looks as it did before it pushed out those branches, but the having pushed them out has gone into its experience permanently, and it will never feel as it did before ;—it feels larger, and richer, and much more of a tree—and it is a well known fact that a limbless man has a sense of limbs as much as he ever had. A human being has a great amount of capacity of self-adjustment to changed circumstances, and that is one of the tokens of his high rank in the creation. If he is planted in a fat soil he blossoms, and if hung, in mid-air, he has the persistency of a cactus, and keeps green and blossoms, more or less.

The point at which an educated clergyman most longs for money is his library. There you may be called to some real self-denial. Possibly you would be a larger man if you could buy more books and possibly a more useful man. That last is more doubtful, though. Books and wide reading, often make men more heady, and unhumble and great-gun-like in the pulpit, than is profitable to the hearer who is more stunned than edified if guns shout too loud. Still, I must not run down books. We do want them, and many of us want more than we can get. It would disgust me to be confined to the one and only full commentary that adorned my father's library, to wit, Adam Clarke's ;—a commentary of so much less worth than many others of to-day that I never think of looking into it. There it stands on my shelf, six octavos, like Cæsar's dust, to stop a hole to keep the wind away, I might almost say ;—though I would not disparage it. But I need more than such a help certainly ; and we all do.

Well, My Brethren, however large your library, you will still be called to much intellectual self-denial, if you are to be a thoroughly effective Minister of Jesus Christ. You cannot spread abroad into general culture. Much in Science you must omit. Much in Literature you must omit. Much, too, in Art. Many modern specialties you must be ignorant of, substantially. Scattered along through the pews in your congregation, there will be numbers of men who know

more than you do along certain lines ; lines, too, whither your tastes run as strongly as do theirs. That is true of the broadest, and strongest and most informed, of us, with our great libraries. We must narrow ourselves, in order to force ;—read less than we desire, and think less excursively than we desire. You cannot get rivers to tide on deep, swift and heavy unless you shut them in narrow runways.

But that is the doom of all men. Self-denial and self-specialization, with a view to chosen ends, is the law to which the lawyer and the physician, the merchant, mechanic, financier, teacher, farmer, musician, engineer, and all the rest, must submit. Civilization gets on by these distributions of labor, and these intense and narrow concentrations. But, Brethren, I beg you to notice how little narrow our specialization is as compared to that of some men ;—a banker's—a tradesman's—a sea captain's—a soldier's—and many more. First of all, our vocation means brain-work, and not mere fingering in some craft, or brute tugging. And it means brain-work in the exercise of all the nobler parts of the brain, the intellectual parts, the affectional parts, the moral parts. I do not think of any pursuit in which a man is more often called to put his entire and royal self into the field. Our themes are of the largest. The interests we handle are of the largest. The motives we wield are large and high. The satisfactions of our office are of the sweetest and purest. So, we can afford to contract ourselves in our reading a little, and subject ourselves to the loss of some esthetic delights and some culture ;—to accept the fact of few costly pictures on our walls—and few of those household decorations and furnishings that are so full of art and so exquisite to the cultivated eye.

But at this point I make another turn on the money question, and inform you that ministers do have secured to them by the workings of providence a long list of real prosperities. Often they have no money to educate their children, but the children get educated. My father could not help me much, but that made no difference, except to give me the discipline and delight of doing for myself. Minister's daughters are generally considered very marriageable girls—no catch pecuniarily, but the loveliest kind of a catch otherwise ; and after all, wedded life does not live by bread alone. Ministers have a good many windfalls. What is a windfall ? It is God doing the unexpected and surprising. If you pry into a windfall far enough, you can explain and show it to be just what might have



been looked for ; but you had better not pry ;—let it stand as wind-fall, and you have the good sensation of it. I had one such when in Yale Seminary. Right out of a clear sky dropped that lightning. When I was married I had another. It was only two hundred dollars a year added to my salary, but it showed that windfalls were possible in my case. I must not run into the particulars of my own life too much, but I wish I might relate to you some things which have been told me, by some of my much-straitened fellow ministers. The Lord takes care of his own. Serve him, and he will do wonders for you. “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong, in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.” (2 Chron. xvi, 9.)

Thy power is in the ocean deeps  
And reaches to the skies;  
Thine eye of mercy never sleeps,  
Thy goodness never dies.

Perhaps you think I am working an optimistic vein. Gentlemen, that is the vein to work when speaking of our calling. If we were freebooters, or corrupters of men, or landlords grinding the poor, there would be no optimism about it ; but we are God’s ambassadors of salvation, and we glory in our calling and we know that all things work together for our good. You may say to me that my lot has been an easy one, and that therefore, it is easy for me to indulge in these high-colored remarks ; but as high-colored remarks as I ever heard have come from ill-conditioned men, to whom I have said in amazement :—How do you live ? They have told me sometimes in detail, and have made me both to laugh, and cry and inwardly shout ; laugh and cry at the mingled pathos and humor of their stresses and distresses, and shout at the way they emerged from their emergencies, and at the strong spirit of life and gladness in their souls in despite of everything, and, in fact, because of everything and all. I saw a letter from a good and true man, whose parishes had always been noticeably undesirable ; and it was written on chance scraps of paper of various shapes, so that it was difficult to track him ; but he came out at the end with this remark :—“Brother, I hope you will not look on these small bits of paper as in any wise disrespectful to you, but rather as one more indication of my spirit of economy, and of the ability I have always had, to live without any visible means of support.” So you see, he was not crushed. He could laugh at his own exigencies,

and he could pray, and he could trust God. It is not best that the worldly prizes in our profession should be remarkably glittering. They are glittering enough ; and if they were more so, we should have a glut of self-seeking men whom God could not use as the vehicles of his grace. I hope now, that without sacrificing truth, I have given you a touch of contentment in your minds, in regard to the pecuniary side of your life as ministers.

You will remember I began to speak of Parish Infelicities ;— I recall you to that idea, and declare unto you in the second place, that you will strike an occasional infelicity in the form of inconvenient persons ; such as the disagreeable deacon who has been much celebrated in prose and verse ;—and the family that crave an extraordinary amount of attention ;—and the precise and obstinate lay theologian out there in the congregation watching you ; and the vehement politician who does not wish you to preach politics, as he says,—and the contrary person of whom John B. Gough has said to us, that when the prayer meeting prayed that he might be removed to Heaven, he spoke up from his knees and told them he would not go ;—and the men and women that like office and must have it ;—and the purse-proud pewholder and the penurious pewholder ;—and the immoral man whom you have hit between the eyes by way of discipline, and who on that account feels sore—he and all his relations—and needs floods of Christian love poured out on him, to keep him along—that is, to keep him from making a permanent surrender to sin and Satan in desperation, and to keep him in your congregation, where, of course, he had better stay, and live down his ignominy—O ! there is a good deal of human nature in Christian Congregations ; sanctified in some part, to be sure, but not perfectly sanctified ordinarily.

My receipt for treating all these cases, I will postpone for a little, while I mention as a third possible infelicity which will overtake you, that your correctness as a theologian may be heavily questioned and you be thrown into some parish peril. Sometimes that questioning starts in your parish and gets serious headway, but as often it makes its first headway among people outside, who listen to you only now and then and know you but fractionally ; and they carry the disturbance into your congregation, and set them wondering whether they can trust their own ears for the soundness of their minister. The short-cut rule for suppressing such riots is just to be sound theologically ;—that is all. Think just as they think.

That will stop them. But that rule may seem coercive to some of you ; so I will name certain other easements pretty soon.

Again, an unwelcome theology may not be your only unloveliness. Your conscience may seem to force you into public deliverances on various practical subjects in which your people have an irritable interest. They are irritable because they are guilty of something, or because the thing you discuss has been carried into politics and struggled on at the polls, or because some single person of their number is a conspicuous example of the particular matter which your sermon holds up ; or because the whole denomination to which your church belongs is tumultuated on the subject you are moved to unfold ;—it may be temperance that you are on, and there right along your middle aisle, in a powerful row of respectability, may sit, and sit straight up, half a dozen or more men whose ability to purchase a seat at all in that metropolitan position depends on the traffic in intoxicating liquors, in one way or another ; or you may speak on divorce, because that matter is all abroad and it seems therefore a good time so to speak ; but right before you is some one who has been divorced and has been married again with the apparent general consent of the community ;—or something you say touches the choir, and next Sunday they refuse to sing ;—or you do what a friend of mine once did, you discharge a battery at these nefarious, cheap stories and colored pamphlets that infest the world ; honestly thinking that perhaps, no criminals are more plainly criminal than those wretched books ; but you have not been long in your parish, and have not learned that one of your oldest deacons drives a trade in that Literature ; therefore he feels hurt, as he ought to, and you do not feel so penitent as he thinks you should, and there you two men are, to fight it out according to the measure of grace given unto each of you.

Years ago we all had the subject of American Slavery for a standing discomposure and risk ; and you young ministers can hardly imagine what a time we full-fledged birds had over that. Some of the ablest and best ministers in the lands were ecclesiastically silenced because they would not keep silent in respect of that great sin and outrage. Some ministers were voted down, and others were pushed on from parish to parish. I look back to my own ministrations at that time, with amusement, amazement and admiration. I was willing to be blown into the sky by parish convulsions on that subject, and there are numbers

of fine people still living who would have been glad to see me go. But as a matter of fact I never went, and here I am, to tell you, Beloved, how it is that men satisfy their consciences as preachers and still stay on the earth not more molested than is good for their patience and welfare.

Still harping on infelicities, I want to take a moment to refer again to the ticklish matter of church discipline. I consider that one of the very hardest things to get through in peace. A certain lenity, which amounts to laxity in some cases, has come into our practice in this regard, so that if you wish to ease yourself along and wink at many things and keep the people all quiet, you can do it, I suppose. But, now and then you will have the plainest kind of a duty to perform; and then comes the strain on your wisdom and courage. The hard navigation of a case of church discipline, comes of the following particulars, I have found. You yourself are tempted to slip along from a strictly judicial feeling, into the feeling of a prosecutor. This person now up for trial has disgraced the Christian Religion and disgraced your church, and you cannot bear that he should be let off with no mark of displeasure on him whatever;—so you shoulder into the case in a manner that is remembered against you. Again, it is difficult to bring on witnesses. You cannot compel people to testify, and where they consent to appear, they will go as far as they please and no farther. Again, the jury before whom cases are brought, (I speak of Congregationalism,) are a mass meeting of men of various ages, and perhaps women—the poorest court conceivable in some respects.

Again, even the officers of your church, the picked men before whom the offender is primarily brought, often know little of ecclesiastical law and usage, and even on the common-sense of the case, that range that lies outside of law and usage, you will be greatly surprised sometimes to see how they will bewilder themselves by a confused palaver and outgush of heart on the duty of Christian forgiveness. My impression is that most Church Boards will discharge almost any sort of criminal, if only he declares himself penitent for what he has done; unless in the person of the minister or in some single hard-headed member, there is found a man of robust perception, who pushes the case.

Again, after the offender is properly disciplined, it requires a great deal more tact, and large wisdom and divine good feeling than many ministers possess, to embrace the culprit-brother and all

his friends, with a heat of affection adequate to their hurt feeling. For they will feel hurt. No matter what the man has done, they are likely to feel injured because the church has taken him up so. In every case that I have had to do with, that has been true. And probably a considerable part of your church will think on the whole that he might have been handled more gently. I wonder whether there ever was an instance, since church members began to fall from grace, where discipline was administered by a unanimous vote. Charles Lamb tells of a "gentle optimist," who could never be brought to criminate anyone, very much; and his friends secretly agreed to invent a most horrible instance of brutality and state it to him, and see if they could not wake up in him some flicker of ethical vigor; but when they had finished, the kind creature only said—"How eccentric!" And that is about as far as many a church trial can be brought along. And that is not extremely strange when you recollect what a lackadaisical view of Christian Charity and Forgiveness has got abroad and what great obstacles ordinarily hinder the putting in of clear and overwhelming evidence before a Church Court.

This subject of discipline is so many-sided that I ought not to have introduced it all perhaps, unless I could spend an hour on its aspects; but I have done it, and in the few moments so spent I fancy I have succeeded in convincing you that when you strike a personal church case, you will be likely to feel that you have sailed into a storm zone, where you must close reef and steer like a hero.

I hope, now, that I have not multiplied and magnified the difficulties of a minister's lot till you are weary and ready to be alarmed. There is nothing to be alarmed about. All through my young days, I heard the church people sing:—"Must I be carried to the skies, on flowery beds of ease," and so on—and who does want just that? Who, that is anybody. Remember that these difficulties which I have massed before you, do not all come in one day; they are scattered along the whole length of the years, here a little and there a little, according as you are able to bear them; and perhaps there are some of these trials that some ministers escape altogether. And if you do not escape them, they will not kill you, provided you remember to put into practice a few sentences of sense which I now lay down. I did not invent these wisdoms; they are just a digest of what ministers generally find out sooner or later. And the sooner the better.



And, first. You must preach such solid and good sermons all along and live such a solid and good life, that any parish storm that comes up by and by will find it hard to upset you. I have in mind at this moment a most laborious and lovely parish minister with whose affairs I was conversant. He was dislodged from his office in quite a gale, simply (as I judged,) because his sermonizing had always been more emotional than brainy. He was affectionate. He was spiritual. He visited his people with marked zeal and acceptability. He served them in their sorrows as no other man could. And they could not help loving him. And that tie of love was a heavy anchor to windward, when that blow arose. But it could not save him. There was a company of particularly intelligent and also admirable people in his assembly, who had pined on the diet he dealt out and had not the heart to hold on to him with both hands, when the wind was taking him away. People are afraid to touch a powerful man, so to speak. They are in a sort of awe before him. It is profane to meddle with him. In that complex thing, a powerful man, it may be questioned which is most powerful, and most contributes to hold him firm in his parish ; his powerful preaching, or his good pastoral work whereby people are made to love him ;—in other words, whether it is respect for a minister, or love for him, that principally makes permanence in his position ; but for now, all I care to say is, that anything which binds the man and his flock together is so much preparation against that evil and distressing day, when he and they, in some agitation, begin to pull on the bands which bind them together. People will put up with a great deal from some men. The Pastor has made a mistake ; he has mismanaged a case ; he has preached an inadmissible sermon, he has showed favoritism, he has let fall a word of personality, he has lost the customary fine poise of his temper ; he has developed a touch of infirmity that no one had ever thought of in connection with him ; but they think as Henry Clay said his constituents ought to think of him ;—that gun of ours has been an excellent one hitherto, and has not been wont to miss fire ; so we will pick the flint and try it again. That is the way it works. That is one of the incidental and unsought advantages of doing one's duty with one's might, straight along, for duty's dear sake. There seem to be cyclones in these days, and in some parts, that can almost pull up the foundations of the globe ;—and such a whirl as that may get into your parish and make all moorings snap ! In that case you must

go with the wind, and land where you happen to. In some better parish perhaps.

My second advice is ;—keep your temper—always. There is no exception to that. You can do it. You are inflammable, but you can do it. I have done it. I was never angry with a parishioner yet. I have been grieved—a little—and indignant perhaps—but no man of my congregations will say that he ever saw me angry with him. I spend my anger on outsiders. I have expressed my mind. I have resisted my parishioners. I have characterized their doings with a full force of adjectives occasionally. I have presided in their public meetings when they were hot and have argued against them from the chair in a square contest of main strength, holding back nothing for fear's sake ; we had all passed beyond fear we were so much engaged ;—but neither in public nor in private, have I lost my good-naturedness. When you lose that you have lost your best strength and your best defence.

And when I say these things, I do not say them boastfully, but only to show that any minister can maintain, I will not say his equability, but his temper. It is a dreadful state of things if a man must not get excited. I claim the privilege of being roiled as much as I please, provided the roiling stops short of outward rages and of unbrotherly feelings. It is not unbrotherly to be indignant at a man, and call him by the names that he deserves ;—not necessarily. You may do all that and have that man feel, in the very moment of your roaring, that you have no malignity towards him. Keep your temper. When you preach on some explosive public question, keep your temper. When your soft-hearted church lets off some miscreant, keep your temper. When some one says that your sermon was long, or sophistical, or dull, or that your prayer was tedious, or that you have no oratory, or that you do not know how to read the scriptures in the congregation ; or that you are dreadful at a funeral, or not stylish enough in a marriage service, or not an easy conversationalist when you make calls, or that you are “seven-eighths a magnificent man and the other eighth a hole,” (as I knew a prominent church member to say of his minister)—yes, young gentlemen, I draw all these illustrations from life ;—but when these insufferable observations are made, do you quietly pocket the remark, and look as bland as though you had been kissed, and day after day consider whether it be not true, that remark, or partially true ;—there is great profit in criticism, if you only candidly hunt for

it—but be tranquil tempered, I say. “Never resent an insult,” said a sensible old minister in my vicinity who had spent a long life successfully in one parish;—he meant, that is the rule for a minister. And he did not mean, be a milksop, either; he was no milksop himself, but a man of views and vigors. A man of views and vigors, but always self-restrained, is always respected; a man in whose composition no downrightness can be discovered, a man of timidity and pliability, and no possibility of noble indignation, is never ranked so high.

This keep-your-temper-doctrine which I have been preaching I will add to a little and say;—treat all men in an amiable manner; the unlovely parishioner so well as the lovely one; the ungentelemanly, the bad, the one who has treated you ill, the one who has got wrathful and left your congregation for no good reason—no matter who he is; bow to him on the street, bow to him on the street when he will not bow to you, say good morning, do his family a kindness, speak well of his excellencies; show him that you are not spending your short three score and ten years in nursing antipathies and grudges. I have heard of ministers, and known some, who, when they feel themselves wronged by somebody, will show it in their manner habitually. It is poor business. It is imprudent business. It makes you feel unwholesome in your mind, and not quite sound morally. It is so much deducted from your capacity to manage a parish.

I know right well how this idea of indiscriminate amiability may offend some young men, who are particularly honest and frank. They think that you ought to show that you do not feel alike towards all people; that it is conventionalism, in one of its meaner forms not to; that a minister who scatters his blandness right and left in the fashion that I recommend has come to be professional and unmanly, a supple manager more than a man. Let us be sincere if we do sour some people, and make some parish losses, say these fine-spirited youth.

Well, I myself used to feel like that. And I acted on it a little, in some cases. I never much troubled myself about affronts to me (I hardly feel that I ever had any,) but I did enjoy letting some folks know that I had a small opinion of them on account of their general character and ways. But I have changed;—changed on principle and changed by natural drift. I see now that there is a large Newfoundland-dog way of treating such matters, without any

loss of self-respect, or lessening of moral perspicacity and moral energy. I should dread to be a parish manager, a distributor of flattery and lies and hypocritical affection, for the sake of parish prosperity; I should rather swing clear over into gruffness and a disagreeable honesty—but there is a midway course that avoids both of those extremes.

First of all it is possible to feel kindly towards all men—really feel it, and not imitate it for professional purposes. And how shall we feel it? In several ways. If you have a growing sense of your own imperfections it will much modify your exasperation at the imperfections of others. Also, if you have a growing habit of recognizing the praise-worthy traits that are apt to illuminate and beautify the worst characters, it will tame down your spirit of criticism in a measure. That stingy pewholder of yours, is truthful, clean in his habits, honest in his business, and a loyal husband. That highly combustible politician, the terror of his precinct, is generous money-wise beyond most men. So it goes. People are mixed. There is slag in them;—wholesale sometimes, but there is gold in them too.

Moreover, it will assist you to be genial with all classes and kinds, to just move upon them with spiritual intentions. Begin to minister unto them the salvation of the Lord Jesus, and they will become wonderfully interesting to you. You cannot hate a man whom you are striving to bless. Just there you enter into the secret of Christ. He was tender to all, because on a mission to all.

Still farther, it will assist you to be tranquil and kindly in the presence of imperfect men and women, if you put yourself habitually with a heavy stress into the great themes that belong to your vocation. I was never in a fret yet which I could not utterly smooth out by looking steadily and long into the grandeurs of the sky, or out upon the shoreless magnificence of the sea, or into the sublimity of the mountains. And like those infinities are our spiritual themes;—vast, majestic, serene;—and communing with them, all small frictions end, all trivial interests are forgotten, all mortal passion dies away.

When you get close to a man by these several devices, you begin to have a sort of enjoyable interest, even in his faults. You are amused by them, perhaps. They manifest themselves in ways that are humorous to a humorous eye. A high-tempered man is an object of seriousness and pity to be sure, but you are often shaken by uncontrollable laughter over him, too. All large-natured

ministers—ministers of the big-dog build—have some side-shaking stories to tell about queer people they have had in their flock, and miserably flawed and blameworthy people ; and about disparaging remarks which free-spoken and ungracious souls have put forth in regard to them, their sermons, and their services, and their well-meant efforts to do exactly the right thing. O ! these terrible things are not terrible, unless you let them be terrible. Just take them right and they are of no particular account. Even at the time they are as small as you please to make them ; and when they are looked back upon through the mellowness of many years, they are scarcely more objectionable than the irregular forms in a landscape ; they melt into the picture of the dear past harmoniously enough.

I must do my whole duty, I suppose, and exhort you now, thirdly, to keep your tongue with all diligence. I heard a much-experienced minister say in a charge to a young one whom we were installing ;—my brother, as you go about your parish, keep your ears open and your mouth shut. It is as hard to hold your tongue as it is to hold your temper. You might think that an even tempered and amiable minister would be able to rule his tongue, but it is not always so. High temper runs into speech, of course, but so does geniality.

Many things grow worse by being talked up. That criticism on your sermon wants nothing better than to have you squirm and mention it to one and another. As the head of your parish, you will naturally be made a confidant by many people, and when you have been a long stretch of years in a place, you will be just rich in information concerning almost every one about you ; and it will be a serious strain on you sometimes, not to use your information and set your knowledge afloat. In some conversations you will nearly burst with your knowledge. Both parties to a controversy will come to you by night, separately and unbeknown to each other, and load you up with their sorrows ; and you must sit through it all with the silence of a hypocrite ; only taking care not to be so silent as to seem unsympathetic. It is close work and involves a great amount of ability, though there need be no guile in it. You must be a sphinx, and a vocal Memnon at the same time. It is easy to be vocal ; but to be silent and vocal both, to speak words just few enough and just numerous enough, and to have the spoken ones go to the spot exactly, and do no hurt on the passage thereto ; that is the problem. A rifle ball goes to the spot fast enough, but it may



kill half a dozen on the road. Let your words be numbered and well chosen. Do not peddle hearsays. Do not have your people feel when you meet them, that you are a man that likes to converse on personalities. Even innocent personalities one may have too much of. Persons are immensely interesting to consider and remark upon, but so are subjects and principles and general movements, if you once get in the way of them. I had rather die than spend my life in a perpetual dribble and run-about of personalisms. It fritters your vigor. It fires your curiosity. It takes you away from the grandeurs and tranquilizations of legitimate subjects. It injures your serviceableness. It makes you the depot into which the talking people all about feel called to bring their chatter. It turns a man into everything that a minister ought not to be. Keep still. When trouble is brewing, keep still. When slander is getting on to its legs, keep still. When your feelings are hurt, keep still, till you recover from your excitement at any rate. Things look differently through an unagitated eye. In a commotion once, I wrote a letter; and sent it, and wished I had not. In my later years I had another commotion, and wrote a long letter; but life had rubbed a little sense into me, and I kept that letter in my pocket against the day when I could look it over without agitation, and without tears. I was glad I did. Less and less it seemed necessary to send it. I was not sure it would do any hurt, but in my doubtfulness, I leaned to reticence, and eventually it was destroyed. Time works wonders. Wait till you can speak calmly, and then you will not need to speak, may be. Silence is the most massive thing conceivable, sometimes. It is strength in its very grandeur. It is like a regiment ordered to stand still in the mid-fury of battle. To plunge in were twice as easy. The tongue has unsettled more ministers than small salaries ever did, or lack of ability.

My last item of advice, I will name but not expand very much. In your preaching you will be independent and courageous, and have your people understand you cannot be suppressed where your conscience is involved; but through all this affirmative and downright habit of yours, this frankness of opinion, this freedom to speak of their faults and their duties and their mistakes, they must be made to see that, in your heart, you are an advisor and not a Pope; that after you have spoken forth your word, and put in your influence, they are at liberty to hold their own opinions and go their

own path ; having perfect assurance that you will not hector them, not fall out with them because they do so. My observation is, that churches and congregations here in New England, will receive almost anything from an honest and sensible man, provided they are continually sure of that one concession from him. Ministers sometimes feel so responsible for their people, that they cannot let them alone when they think or do what they cannot approve. "I must give an account of them before God," say these anxious men ; and they interfere, not in the large way of counsel only, but in pestering ways ; in sputterings, in contrivings and stratagems, and pious circumventions of their people, and affectionate irritabilities—the fidgeting of a nervous mother rather than the masculine largeness and repose of a man who means to do his duty, and then fall back on God, and let Him defend his own truth.

It is possible to carry great loads of loving anxiety for your fellow men, and want them to do thus and so, tremendously, and preach about it, and yet not let your desire carry you into pettifogging endeavors, and puttering and lying awake nights, and seeming to have a contrary spirit, and a desire for your own way. A man in the leadership and presidency of a parish, is in a position so responsible that the longer he lives the more insufficient he feels ; but after he has done his duty in an earnest and manly way, in any given case, the responsibility passes over upon God, and upon that person, or that people, to whom he has ministered, preached his sermons, reiterated and urged his doctrine, addressed his private entreaty, and fairly exhibited his pastorly heart.

I have now finished my rules for getting along with parish inconveniences. And for your encouragement, I will say ;—I personally know many ministers who are practical exponents of these rules. And for your still farther encouragement, I will add, I can point you to a large number of ministers who fail more or less in some of the things I have mentioned, but who manage parishes with large success nevertheless. They are weak at one or two points ;—being too sensitive for example ;—but they are so strong at all the other points, that when you come to add them up, (and that is just what their parishes gradually do) ; their preaching, their pastoring, their executive ability, their advisory weight and skill, their felicity on special occasions, their shining qualities at a genteel tea-party, their serviceableness in the affairs of the town, and all the rest of their powers, faculties, attributes, and decorative

uses ;—add them, I say, and get the sum of them—they are truly men who, once settled in, over, and on, a congregation, can stay there as long as a man is apt to care to stay anywhere in this migratory generation.

## CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS.

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I shall spend an hour with you this time on the ceremonial occasions in which ministers are so often called to officiate.

I began life myself as an extreme anti-ceremonialist, and looking back for some explanation of that, I find the following things to have been true ;—and I mention them, because some of you may be in the same darkness and misconception in which I was, and as I have come out of it, and know why and how, I have a conceit that, if I am speeded, I may at least start you out of it. Speaking in a Congregational Seminary, I should not feel free to carry you all off into downright Ritualism, if I could ; but I do feel free to give you some liturgical and ceremonial exhortations, it having been unanimously agreed even by Congregational churches, that ceremony and order, in some kind and measure, are both necessary and wholesome.

I think that my individualistic theorizings went a long way to make me an enemy of ceremonies. If my personal relations to God make the whole of religion for me, and all associational religious life is a profane intermeddling with my sacred privacies, of course public religion and ceremonies are out of the question, for they are associational ; they are a combination of numbers of persons to do certain things together, in the same place, and at the same time ; their being in them throughout an implication that religion is as much a manward thing as a Godward. When we move in ceremonies, (I speak of religious ceremonies) we are after three things ; we seek the benefit to ourselves of self-expression ; we seek the benefit to ourselves of the united expression of others, by word or act or both ; in our presence ; and we seek a benefit for others in the same two-fold way, they expressing themselves each one and having the good of it, and at the same time having the

immense good of seeing and hearing all the rest. In all this action and interaction there is a combined movement on God, to be sure, and a responsive movement on his part ; but what I expressly wish to bring out is the intensely social and corporate character of all ceremonializing. It is as completely opposed to individualism in its absolute form, as anything can be ; and in so far as a man is individual and insular, he must abhor ceremonies ; and even Quakerism, with its silentness, is too ceremonious for him.

Another dissuasive from ceremonials which had much strength with me, as it has with millions more, was the tendency of such things to Formalism ; that instinctive make-shift of the human soul when it would seem pious without being it. I thought, the more ceremony is amplified, the more inevitably will formalism get in—so that our only safety is to back off from the whole thing into speechlessness, and non-expression, so far as practicable. Particularly in the case of ministers, I said that ceremonies full, sonorous, and spectacular, must be disadvantageous. They (the ministers) stand at the head of the multitude, the major-generals of the occasion, their voice leading all the voices, their pantomime leading all the pantomimes, and they swollen with the same feeling that a rudder must have when, by the least motion of its own little self, the great bulk of the great ship is made to sway. And I think even yet that there is a considerable force of self-consciousness and strut in this officialism, if the minister does not look out for himself. I have felt it in the plain and modest liturgies and pomps of my own congregation.

Another thing that condemned ceremonials for me, was their unwieldiness when we want to move out aggressively upon the masses, the non-church goers, and the mighty multitudes and majorities who have never been schooled in ceremonies, do not know their meanings, and look upon them therefore as an elaborated pomposity in the main.

Also I was averse to ceremonials, because I was, soul, body and spirit, part and parcel of a democratic social order. In a state of society where the theory is, and the feeling is, that one man is as good as another, it is unavoidable that ceremoniousness between man and man will decline ; manners will simplify ; obeisances, salutations and the innumerable forms of elaborate respect, will be abridged ;—officials will be inaugurated in simple ways, and after they are inaugurated will not be hedged about by awful observances ;



they can be approached without a half hour spent in formalities, and they can be spoken to in ordinary respectable English and even in slang if the visitor does not know any better, rather than in the inflated adulation of an Oriental court; while the costume you wear on the august occasion, may be according to your own fancy pretty much.

Well, in this decadence of stateliness and high-wrought gentility and formalism, under the influence of the democratic idea, the people fall out of the habit of ceremony and the relish of it, so that even when they pass into the field of religion and approach the Most High God, and make up rounds of worship wherein they shall operate together in congregations and in multitudes, they disincline to detail, copiousness, resonance and pomp; and trust to a few plain things.

If any of you, my Brethren, are cordially averse to ceremony, I presume you have felt now, as I have passed on in the explanations, that I was touching the depths of your case. Very well, how did I get out of these depths. I think that being a minister, and being compelled to speak and act and officiate, and go on parade sometimes, whether I wanted to or no, (as at weddings for example), demoralized me somewhat and made me feel that creatures of sense may reasonably indulge in a spare amount of form. What was said of error, may be said of ceremonies:—

Seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

And this movement of mine was assisted by the plain failure before my eyes of individualism, when applied to life. I saw that individualism amounts to the dissolution of society and a practical nullification of the second great commandment:—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." It cannot be defended. Moreover, I saw that all Christian bodies had consented to ceremony and were in it;—some of them all over,—so that the question:—"Shall we have ceremony?" has been decided by the common sense of mankind; the sanctified common sense and the unsanctified; the only question remaining to discuss being the quantity and the quality of the thing. The only Christians that undertake not to consent to ceremony are the Quakers; and with what success I will answer. The two forms in which ceremony embodies itself are, words and gestures or acts, said words and gestures being assisted to be all they can be by our various surroundings. Our Quaker brethren have

gone in on those two points with all their might and have given us public services without architecture and the colors of art, without ecclesiastical costume, without music, without formal and united acts, and often without one word spoken ; nevertheless I never felt myself under such an incubus of ceremoniousness as in their assemblies. In the first place, their worship is evidently a prescribed thing ; no such result as that worship of theirs could come of anything but a conspiracy ; and the moment a service is prescribed, it begins to take on a formal character. Let one of our Congregational churches, accustomed to worship in the unpompous old-fashioned way, do so simple a thing as to print its order of service and put it in the pews, thus notifying mankind that it has an order, and does not move in pure spontaneity ; and that act is distinctly formalizing in its influence. It originated in an increase of the liturgical spirit in that church and it fosters that spirit. So the Quakers. That service of theirs is carefully and rigidly fore-ordained ; and you feel that it is fore-ordained all through you, when you sit in it ; and you are ritualized to that extent. That, in the first place, I say.

Next, while they repudiate vestments, they are costumed in an almost more than fore-ordinated uniform ;—a religious uniform, because although they wear it on all social occasions yet it is put on from a religious impulse and for religious purposes, as much so as the solemn robes of a nun.

Next, they are massed in their meeting-house in a certain noticeable order, men together and women together, and dignitaries together always ; as much ordered, thus and so, as the guests at a state dinner with a king. And those artificial rows of human beings work an effect on the mind of a sensitive beholder precisely like the effect of that elaborated action which you see in ritualistic assemblies.

And next, their silences are immensely vocal, so far as all the ends of impression are concerned ;—and are meant to be. They are a powerful preaching of their particular doctrine of the Inner Light ; that, at least. I do not think of any way in which it could be better preached than by resolutely sitting still and waiting for it. They thus eloquently say :—God in the mind is indispensable, and all utterance on religion without him is mere human forwardness and very near an awful crime ; moreover, to have God in the mind is feasible and to be looked for. That is very loud doctrine, even

if they adopt a silent form of saying it. I beg you to believe that I do not say these things as disposed to fault that excellent body of Christians. I am only earnest to show that non-ceremoniousness may put itself forth in a powerfully ceremonious manner, and may even get to itself the whole essence of formalism in a formal, combined effort to put formalism down. I believe that is often done ;—and not alone among Quakers.

Here I am liable to be asked :—Why should we desire to increase Form, if the whole effect of Form can be secured under usages uncomplex and bare, as in the case of Quakers. To that I reply :—There are many truths and many feelings that cannot be expressed by a silent sitting in premeditated rows, and other like simplicities. Neither can we get full expression for our myriad-minded selves, even through words, to whatever extent they are multiplied. A great advance in expression is made when words are joined to music and they together, carry a theme. I am not going to say anything against the possibilities of expression and impression that are in preaching ; but I have been made to know a thousand times in my own experience that music can beat us all, especially in its play on the feelings and in its power to voice the feelings.

But in addition to words and music, we need ceremonial actions and routines of action, in order to a really complete formulation of ourselves and a full stroke on our sensibilities. The Inner Light is profoundly worth preaching, but so are the Incarnation, and the Cross, and the Resurrection, and Regeneration, and a score more ; and they never get preached in their full strength and with its own proportionate emphasis on each one, except through a ceremonial that has variety, and amplitude and the completeness of real art. You do not like to have me speak that word Art in connection with worship, but I speak it because I know that expression is an art, and in any case where expression is not thoroughly artistic in the sense of thoroughly conformed to the established laws of art, in its structure and organization, as also even in so secondary and superficial a matter as its ornamentation, if it has any, there is a failure as respects those great substantial uses which expression seeks to secure.

These are some of the reasons why I have come to see some sense in ceremony. Being a religious official I had to see some sense in it, or leave the ministry. Being brought to see that indi-

vidualism, as I held it, was practically un-Christian, and that associated worship is as important as private worship, there was nothing left for me but to fall into the ceremonies by which alone associated worship can formulate itself; especially in any complete and balanced formulation. Being brought to see that the minimum of form does not necessarily imply the minimum of Formalism, and that ample Form does not necessarily imply a corresponding amplitude of Formalism, but that we may have Formalism in its entire spirit, its entire self-obfuscation, pride, and curse, under a ritual whose one boast and joy is that it is not a ritual at all; being brought to see these things demonstrated in life, and demonstrated by reasonings on the motive of the case, as well as readings in the Bible, I was not disobedient to my light, but succumbed; and there stay.

As to the unwieldiness of an expanded ritual for purposes of propagandism among the un-Christianized, all I have to say is that those Christian bodies, if there be any which will not go out to the battles of the Lord except as accoutred just so always, must suffer the disadvantage of their own stiffness. I am not familiar with all communions, but I have an idea that Romanism, with all its devotion to externalism and precision, has generalship enough to limber itself to the circumstances of almost any situation, so that while in St. Peter's she will give you a first-class specimen of ritual, with all possible accessories for the eye and the esthetic sense, she will also on occasion strip herself of these and stand out bare in fighting trim, absolutely unencumbered and athletic. When I was in her queen city, Rome, Sunday after Sunday in the afternoons, I heard her much praised orator, Father Tom Burke, address a large assembly in English, on the points of controversy between Romanism and Protestantism;—and I recollect this admirable fact, that the time spent in ritualizing us was not so long as a good, solid Congregational long prayer. At the end of that brief prelude the priest went into the pulpit and argued with us for an hour. That was sense. We were not there and were not invited there to see Romanism in the full glory of her ceremonial, but to be labored upon by the reason, and Father Burke confined himself to the business of the occasion. Let us have ceremony, but let us be all things to all.

With respect to the dislike of ceremony among democratic peoples; while the decline of ceremony between man and man may be admissible, on the ground that ranks are abolished and

every man is as important as his neighbor ; surely it is no inconsistency to magnify ceremonial, when we come to Him to whom all earthly personages are less than nothing and vanity.

You have noticed thus far that while I have shown myself not unfavorable to ceremony, I have not undertaken to make precise statements as to the amount of it that we, non-liturgical people, were well better admit. My opinion is, that there is a preparedness in the Congregational mind (let me speak of that as being acquainted with it) for a ceremonial advance in two directions ; namely, in the quality of what ceremony we already have, and in the quantity of it. Better, and more of it, that is the idea. First, better.

Under that head, I can hardly speak my whole mind without seeming ungracious. I continually admire the liturgical success of my clerical brethren under the difficulties of their situation. The one gigantic difficulty is the habitual extemporization to which they are committed. It is required of them—that is, the ideal of Christian worship requires of them, as do also the congregations as they advance in the graces of civilization—that they make their worshipful utterances and lead the people in lucid English, in orderly English, in simple English, in solid English, in English sufficiently copious and yet not jejune, in English that knows how to stop in ten minutes at the most and yet that can in that time sweep the circuit of the entire creation ; in unrepetitious English, in English that while it is standard and beyond substantial criticism, is so far suffused with the personality of the author, his thought and his feeling, that it is fresh and relishable ; in English that recollects both God and the congregation, but in recollecting the congregation does not succumb and make a speech instead of a prayer ; in English that ranges the entire assembly sympathetically and gathers up the thoughts of many hearts and the burdens of many souls and carries the whole to the Heavenly Father in a true intercession ; in an English, in short, which no mortal ever spoke extemporaneously, except in good moods and in good wafts of the Holy Spirit. And even then the moods and wafts may be so good as to carry him along into an affluence which seems redundant and protracted to unsympathetic sinners. The demand for the best is growing, I say. The real best—not the artificial best. No slovenliness of utterance. No bad grammar. No untasteful allusions. No words with over-mundane associations clinging to them. No colloquialisms. No



free-and-easiness in the presence of the Most High. No sentimentalism of religious affection. No windiness of self-conscious rhetoric. No listening to the modulations of your own voice. No rages, as though you could not hold in your own Godly emotions. No dreariness and soliloquizing instead of praying. No lashing yourself up to a hypocritical animation. No personalities. No photographic description of all the virtues of the deceased in your prayer at funerals, and no extended recognition of all his relatives.

And while you are careful of your speech, you must be careful how you act. I saw Mr. Spurgeon officiate at the Lord's Supper, seated throughout and with his two legs lifted into a neighboring chair. I did not ask him whether it was the gout that did that, or his preliminary few words of talk on the fact that Christ's last Passover was a familiar meal whereat the participants half reclined. I do not criticise him ; but you must behave, where you are master of ceremonies: I was at an ornate and numerous wedding in a church where the officiating minister stood cater-cornered to the bride and groom, instead of in absolute face-to-face. He should have been more ceremonious. Perhaps he did not like the very considerable show before him and took that way to say so. Perhaps he had been wont to assume irregular attitudes in his pulpit, by way of getting himself into liberty. Perhaps he did not care how he stood, and having happened to strike that sidelong position at the beginning, kept it ; a little thing. But we had better care.

I was told of a Congregational minister who would place his hat on the communion table always when he passed into the pulpit, and of a remote deacon (a Baptist he happened to be) who was seen to bring the bread of communion to the church in his pocket handkerchief and cut it with his jack-knife ; and I have officiated in a few churches where, when I said *let us pray*, to my amazement almost no one bowed, so little sense of ceremony had the Christians there ; all of which cases and forty more I would mention as strong illustrations of what uncereemoniousness or lack of the ceremonial feeling may lead to. The gravity of these misdemeanors lies right there, in their lack of ceremonial feeling. The minister who liked to have his hat stand on the consecrated table and who was driven out of his parish, at last, in a quarrel that started in that persistent act of his, was not a sacramentalist, you may be sure ; he did not believe in Formalism but in a spiritual religion. What is a table ?—so much wood fashioned into a certain

shape by a carpenter;—and what are bread and wine and why should there be any particular parade over them? What they signify is important, but they are simply bread and wine, and no act of any official can make them more than that. So ran his mind doubtless, and any act of minor irreverence which he committed, was a growth from his unceremonialism. Not every unceremonialist will violate decorum and come short of the full ideal in his ceremonial ministrations, in really gross ways; but in lesser ways they all are apt to fail. Many men have not the ceremonial instinct in them strong enough to really get into the meaning of a service,—and if they are not thus in the service they are sure to blunder in conducting it. Take prayer. Prayer has in it certain essential elements. It is made up of confession, intercession, and kindred ideas, and the minister knowing that, has a perpetual guide in his public outpourings; and while in any given prayer he may press confession, or thanksgiving, or some other one part, more than he does the other parts; take him year by year, he is sure not to violate the proportions of things and lead his people in the line of a one-sided culture. He knows what prayer is, constitutently, and thus his knowledge of the ideal is his constant safeguard.

Or take a whole service, in its many particulars. Those particulars are to be thrown in together in some sort of order, but why in one order more than another? Why should the sermon come here, and not there? If there are three or four prayers in the service, how should they differ from each other? Should they differ at all? Should a Christian service move towards a climax, like that supreme and awful moment in the Roman mass when the Host is elevated? Is there any natural crisis in our communion service, or any gradation of interest whatsoever—or shall we strike the major chord of the occasion, and strike it with all our might, when we first open our lips, and spend the rest of the hour in just a tiresome reiteration of that main stroke?

So in a wedding. What is a wedding? We stand up and some transaction is to be gone through with. What we are after is plain enough. We intend to make that man before us, and that woman, one for life. But that end is to be made sure by a certain complex formality; quite complex, if it be looked into enough. What are those complexities—exactly? A prayer is to come in, one or more, probably. Well, how much of possible prayer shall be let into that prayer? Shall you spread abroad upon the general

themes of the Christian Salvation? Some officiators seem to feel that all the great topics they may omit, are thereby dishonored. So they aim always to at least allude to those momenta, no matter what the occasion nor how specifically limited. And that is the reason that prayers on express occasions are often so enormously spun out.

I once saw a minister baptize a child; and what did he do? Do? As near nothing as possible. I suppose he baptized it, because he sprinkled the little head with water and repeated the customary Triune sentence. And he did offer a prayer one minute in length. But he spoke the formula and he spoke the prayer in a tone that had no atmosphere about it, it was as bare of suggestiveness and magnetism as the human voice could be when reciting a table of statistics. I say, that minister had not studied the significance of infant baptism and gone into the subject so that he could see it from the inside, the vast inside. If he had, he would have swelled a little and vibrated; and not merely would he have personally dilated, but he would have been inclined to swell his ceremony most likely, by certain quite feasible additions. Supposing he had called on his choir to chant:—"Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not;" or supposing he had himself read that passage. Supposing he had said a few words to the parents. Supposing he had expanded his curt prayer to include the undeniable items and ground facts of child-baptism. Supposing he had Romanized the occasion to the extent of half a dozen innocent little particulars which I might name, winding up with a suitable shout from the choir—yes a shout: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" For what in all life more deserves to be shouted over, than such a scene as that, with its unutterable, tender and glorious implications.

What I am insisting on all along here is, that ministers need to perceive the real contents of a service or ceremony before they can be trusted to conduct it. Except as they grasp the rationale of it, they are likely to mar it, any minute. They put in impertinences, or leave out pertinences, or shackle along under the law of haphazard, or their movement is a hitchetty-hitch when it should be flowing. How much there is in that last! A service often will have pauses in it and misjoins that amount to breaks and jolts and are to you like riding over a rough road;—the clergyman and his choir do not lap on to each other perfectly;—he does a thing, and then they do something, and then he does something else, and

the transitions from thing to thing are jerky ; whereas they ought to be like the silent flow of curves. Or the minister and the people, take up the Psalter responsively and the two do not seem to be in the same key of feeling ; they operate independently of each other ; he and they responding should make a melodious oscillation, whereas it is crank-work they are in, more nearly—and he is responsible for it ;—for if he really understood his service and had a good warm ceremonial consciousness and enjoyment of ceremony, a delight in seeing it move according to its own instinct (for, evermore, ceremony because it is ceremony, likes to move off beautifully and impressively), then these infelicities in his service would not appear, he would get himself and his choir settled together in a close co-ordination, and he would pull his people out of their mechanicalism by the inspiration of his voice and the elan of his leadership.

Our non-liturgical churches more and more demand these gifts in ministers—I say again. They want their traditional forms made the most of. They want them to be operated in a cultivated manner. It is as easy to save souls in the use of good English, as bungling English ; in the use of good taste as coarse taste, in the enjoyment of an ordered and commanding ritual as in the enjoyment of a ritual whose pride it is to be no ritual, but spontaneity and lawlessness.

If there is among us this desire that our inheritance of Forms be used in the best manner, it is to be looked for also that our people will tolerate some addition to our old forms. I believe they will. They are doing it in many churches. They are ready to make a great deal more of music than the Fathers did. They see, as they were not used to, that music is a substantial element in worship, and not a mere decoration and a dangerous one. The old plain hymn tune that anybody can sing is good, and countless souls have been helped on by their privilege in that plain work ; but music that nobody can sing save a trained vocalist, may also be good—first-rate—and if the choir and their minister can start a back-and-forth between them, wherein some godly theme shall be tossed to and fro in a manner to make it shine and show all its phases, that also is first-rate and fascinating ;—and if the congregation please to make a unison movement on some creed that they like, or on the Lord's Prayer, that is good ;—and if they enjoy handling the scriptures responsively, there is no hurt in that ;—and

if they want to flush the ceremony of the Holy Supper with some new colors and extend its particulars till they fill the whole time of the Sunday morning, as feeling that a rite so central and so stocked with holy and tender meanings, and so full of grace for sinful men, will bear a whole morning put upon it ; very well, let them expand ; there is nothing uncongregational in that. And if they abjure barren baptisms, both infant and adult ;—and if in this advance of ceremony in ordinary worship their extraordinary occasions begin to advance ; their weddings, their funerals, their dedications, their anniversaries, their days of Easter and Christmas and the like ; it is no wonder and who can prove there is any disadvantage in it ? I select these illustrations from what I have seen among our people in these latter years. I was at a communion service recently in one of our own churches, which went on in this manner : There were various exercises of a general nature, which consumed more than half an hour. They were general, as not taking the assembly into the very heart and full stress of the Supper ; and yet they artfully and sweetly preluded the Supper. Then the minister descended to the table and read that rich passage in Isaiah :—“ He was despised and rejected of men,” the choir chanting the alternate sentences in a quiet minor movement ;—which minor movement rose into something more joyful as the minister led on into sentences of invitation :—“ Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden,” and the like. Then a short address was read from the Communion office of a certain branch of the Christian church, also the history of the institution of the Supper from the same Office. Then an extemporaneous prayer was offered, not two minutes long ;—a prayer of consecration strictly. It could be thus brief because it simply asked God to turn those natural elements, there offered to him, to a divine use. Then the bread was broken and distributed in silence ; and after that, while the minister filled the cup, the choir chanted in a subdued and refined passage : “ O, the sweet wonders of that Cross, where my Redeemer loved and died.” The cup was passed, and then the minister moved forth into a large and free range of prayer, through every word of which though, you could hear, now near and now afar off, the tone of Christ’s mediatorial passion. There was a considerable mention of persons and classes, and among the rest an express commendation of the departed, made express by a preliminary noticeable pause, a dropping of the voice, and a use of the beautiful collect for All



Saints' Day in the Protestant Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. Then all stood up and chanted together in a full, unanimous outpouring, the good words of the Gloria in Excelsis ;—"Glory be to God on high, and on earth, peace, good will towards men." And the service closed with the benediction.

Now let alone the exact philosophy of that Order, and even admit if you want to, that it was untruly organized here or there, you can see in it a tendency towards ritual liturgical touches, coy dallings with Form, longings to get the Supper out into a generous statement ;—and you can see, I submit, how practicable, harmless and serviceable, well-managed dallings may be. And this kind of thing is going on all about, and is permitted to go on and will be ; and you, young gentlemen, are going out into this world to favor it, or to oppose it. My hope is that you will favor it, and direct it and make it reasonable.

I have indulged myself in two lectures to you on Imagination in ministers, as theologians and as sermonizers—I hope you will not feel totally worn out with that word, if I gratify myself a little once more, and conclude this hour with the thought that no man can manage ceremony as it deserves to be managed, except as he enters into it imaginatively.

Take a wedding. The atmosphere of the occasion requires some suffusiveness and glow on the part of the minister ; and magnanimity—*magnus, animus*—a mind sized up to the height of the hour. Well, how shall he be sized up, that poor, limited mortal ? In one way only ;—by a solar vision of the tremendous contents of a wedding. The flowers and the music and the gorgeous costumes, and the showy bridal procession, and the manifold pulsation, are a brilliant notice served on him that the occasion has contents ; but it is a notice addressed to his imagination, chiefly. It is an occasion of delight, of anticipation, of memory, too, of uncertainty, of solemn and tender certainty ; the whole preceding life of the parties concerned is in it and their whole coming life and their eternity ; there is in it their youthful view of the act and also the parental view, also the rather numerous views of the emotional spectators manifested in nameless out-bubbings, great and small ;—it is a time of delights and it is a time of tears ;—and a clergyman who stands in front of all this, without the faculty to read these glittering signs and signals hung out, without the faculty to enter realistically into the feelings of the parties and all parties,

and create the occasion from the interior, is a sad piece of insufficiency. He may make some observations, he may proceed to invent a prayer produced from the depths of his own unperceiving mind, a prayer born of hearsay as to what it probably ought to be at such a time ; or he may assist himself by a printed ceremony which he reads ; but all he does fails to rhyme with the surroundings ;—he is outside of the surroundings, and they are outside of him ;—he is Mr. Gradgrind consciously discharging a function, but this spectacle has no Gradgrind element in it ; his tone as he reads that printed page is literal and colorless, and the liturgic page therefore is outraged—what are those old offices in the books, in reality ? printer's ink and white paper spread out ? forms of far-away hearsay ? is that the whole account ? No. In these carefully preserved and dear forms, we have, first, a pretty entire condensation and practical digest of the main realities of the several occasions which they profess to voice ; and besides that, a sound of foregone ages, a mighty murmur of assemblies back and back, tones of the living, tones of the dead, holy offices are they verily, most plural, plenary, mystical and immeasurable, and the voice of the clergyman who officiates in them must in some measure show this plenitude of things, else they are robbed, and a wedding or a funeral, or anything else, that tries to get itself spoken forth through them is defeated and comes forth in insufferable abridgements, mutilations, and unvoluminous and unrotund pretenses of utterance. So have I myself heard these forms dishonored by individual clergymen, even in liturgical churches ;—and, parallel to this, I have heard extemporized forms made to labor in the same disability ; the fundamental infirmity in the whole business being that the clergyman could not be a bit inflamed in his imagination.

It might seem that an occasion so sombre as a funeral, does not give much range for this bright faculty, these visions, and these creative flights. Imagination is not a bright faculty, any more than memory is, or reason, or conscience. They are all bright or dark, according to the ranges in which they happen to be called to fly. See Dante, see Milton, with a gravity deep as the grave, when treating grave things. See all great poets when they address themselves to that thing of glooms and gleams, human life. The truth is, Imagination is essentially serious and, in her utmost blithesomeness, there is never a touch of levity. A funeral has its imaginative tokens, its symbols and vocal signs, its various externals very stimulating to a

perceiving and responsive person ; and it were long to tell (too long) into what realms of vastness and shadow these externals lead back ; —but quite as much into realms of illumination is he led back who has the faculty to be led, when standing by the dead and among the sorrowful ; and an unimaginative mind proclaims itself by an excessive and monotonous lugubriousness in these scenes of lamentation, as often as in any other way. A funeral occasion has in it certain elements, or contents, mixed contents, as I have said ; and the secret of ceremonial fulness, propriety, flow, and satisfying completeness all around, is just to get at, grasp, and master, those elements. In full possession of those data, in conscious and emotional possession of them, you are released from the bondage of fear, fear of man, fear that you will hurt some bleeding heart, fear that you will make some infelicitous allusion, fear that some word will fall from you that is not in absolute taste, fear that you will express yourself more joyfully than you ought, in view of the fact that several persons just about you are not joyful at all ;—and when you come to read your suitable Scriptures, you interpret them in your reading according to their greatness ; by your cadence, your in and out of inflection, the tranquil warmth and fulness of your tone, or perchance by your march of energy—by all those subtle tokens whereby the human mind declares its thoughts and emotions, with their innumerable shadings and vicissitudes.

What I have said of weddings and funerals, applies to all ceremonies. Their true impressiveness is violated if you do not use them in an ideal way. The Protestant Episcopal service begins :—“ Dearly beloved ”—what ! all those undeveloped and miserably flawed and often personally disagreeable saints out there in the assembly, dearly beloved ! How can the man say that ! Some of them are dearly beloved, easily enough. Anybody can see that. But the rest of them, scattered about ! How can he ?

That is good reasoning, is it not ? I used to deal with that affectionate expression in that way, and many do. But now I can say ;—dearly beloved, to all church people and to all mankind, and it does not wrench my sincere conscience, at all. I like to say it. When I say, dearly beloved, I address the Church ideal—I speak to those imperfect people as potentially and prophetically perfect, and perfectly lovable, by the inworking, sure grace of God. I imaginatively impute to them the excellence of their coming better day. I see them in Christ Jesus just as their God does. I address Him

in them. I do it not by a sophistication of my own faculties. Imputation is not sophistication, but a four-square reality, a reality of the imagination, a valid, instinctive, and inevitable movement of feeling.

And Christian worship is full of these imaginings ;—these glorious and glorifying imaginings. All men are dearly beloved on the same principle. Jesus bore them all in his own body on the tree, and they are redeemed,—and, seeing them as redeemed, I cannot avoid a warmth towards them. It is his warmth reproduced in me and mine is as valid and rational as his. Jesus loves them with a love of pity because they are so imperfect—that is so—but he loves them with a love of admiration also, looking forward to the beauty of holiness to which they may come, by force of redemption and redeeming grace. I might show you this same instinctive play of ideality, here and there, through the whole liturgy. The service corruscates with it. And it is the one thing that sustains ceremonial, and makes it other than a hollow thing. When Richard Cobden died, the Earl of Beaconsfield, in the English House of Commons, delivered a memorial eulogy on him—which I read with admiration. It was only a few minutes long, but it rose to the occasion as no other speech on Cobden then and there did. John Bright tried, but his grief broke him down. Beaconsfield saw Cobden in his whole magnitude and in his whole remarkable quality, and he saw Cobden's industrious, manly, and fruitful life ; he saw mourning England ; he saw the great, sad, irreparable vacancy in the world made by that death ; and in masterly vision and comprehension, of all the several realities of the occasion, he spoke ; and the utterance was adequate and memorable.

There are many things that we call occasions. The assembly in our National House of Representatives, in memory of President Garfield, when Mr. Blaine spoke so well, was one. When Washington bade Congress farewell and surrendered his sword, there was another. When Luther met the Diet at Worms, when England tried Warren Hastings, when Lincoln spoke on the field of Gettysburg, when Chalmers and his friends left the General Assembly of Scotland, when Frederick Robertson looked down from the gallery of the theatre at Oxford and saw William Wordsworth come in to receive an honorary degree in a tumult of the multitude that almost shook the Island : these were occasions, and all of us are likely to be overtaken by such, and possibly pushed into the forefront of

them, as their orator or their master of ceremonies. And what I say is, that some men are good for an occasion, and some are not ; —those that are being made so (other things being equal), by their large-minded, high-minded, fine-minded, hundred-eyed, intuitive, ideal, imaginative comprehension of the exact facts of the moment. And religious ceremonies are no otherwise than secular ceremonies, in this regard. A minister at the sacred table needs just Beaconsfield's ability to enter into the situation. Some men will dedicate a church in a manner to change your feeling towards that building forever ;—or they will excommunicate a church member with a similar impressive ceremoniousness—or they will receive a deputation or address an outgoing regiment in the name of God ; or ordain a deacon ; or consecrate a field of graves, or welcome a world's Evangelical Alliance, or voice the good-by of a great congregation looking for the last time on some trans-Atlantic visitor—as when Bishop Simpson, in the name of American Methodism in New York assembled, poured out a valedictory on Dean Stanley—it does not make much difference what they are called to (these ceremonial men) ; they know how to distil into their speech the entire spirit of the hour, with its multiplied circumstances ;—they may be very simple, they may be robed in no official dress, whether lawn, powdered wig, cocked hat, or priestly stole, they may read out of no book, but out of their mind only ; they may eschew sounding titles and all pomps of conventionality. Nevertheless they have great effect on all witnesses, as having visibly gathered up into their minds whatever goes to make the occasion ;—gathered it up for their own enlargement at the moment and their aggrandizement of feeling, and for the ennoblement of their diction.

Great is this gift in the house of God. Happy is the man who always sees and feels the import of a Christian service. Blessed is he who cannot be staled by routine ;—who feels the pathos of his last baptism as much as he felt the pathos of his first—and more—who never goes to a burial but the whole burden of it and the whole consolation are on him ; who officiates at the Lord's Supper for the ten hundredth time with the tides of Calvary in undiminished flow about him ; who lifts all ceremony into the ideal—who takes whatsoever of noble architecture, or noble music, or pictorial beauty, may happen to surround him in his service, and weaves it into the texture of his feeling, as harmonious with his soul's holiest experiences and indeed serviceable thereto ; while he moves before



his people, and with his people, in the endless rounds of his office ; simulating in little and so far as he may that other and perfect worship, into which all our ceremonies shall merge at last.

## THE RIGHT CONDUCT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

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My Brethren, I am here to-day to address you on a theme which you have heard discussed before, with more or less fulness, I suppose. Nevertheless, I speak right on, as knowing that the multiplication of witnesses on any given point of truth may be a serviceable thing, especially if the witnesses have had a good deal of experience of that whereof they affirm, and out of their experience have managed to thoroughly make up their minds.

You will observe as I pass forward, that I understand myself to be addressing a body of young men, the larger number of whom by far are expecting to take service in non-liturgical churches, churches of the sort with which I myself have been connected all my days; though let me say, I shall distinctly avoid any special comparison between the worship of our churches and that of the more liturgical and ritualistic bodies. I have almost any amount of fellowship with them and could discuss their ways with entire candor and geniality, I fancy; however, I do not feel myself called to that on this occasion.

When we speak of Public Worship, we mean often the entire service of the Sanctuary; but I shall use the word a little more strictly to-day, and shall exclude the sermon, as not in exact definition, worship. The sermon is a subject by itself, and a large one too. And first, let me consider the prayers, of which in our usage, there are three;—the invocation, the central and main prayer (often described with fearful truth, as the long prayer,) and the closing one. And concerning these three, I remark to begin with: That they should be kept distinct—absolutely so, as a rule—in the minister's

theory of them and in his practice ; and that for several reasons. First, in the structure and philosophy of our service they do cover different fields. They are not intended to lap each other, much less to be mixed together in a total chaos ; the long prayer being the invocation over again, for the reason that the invocation swept the entire possible range of prayer ; and the closing prayer being a reproduction of both, only with a certain necessary brevity. That is not the theory of our worship, I say ; but the invocation is precisely what its name implies, a calling down of God's blessing on what is to follow, and stands at the beginning, as having an express function right there ; and in strictness (by the way,) should not be preceded by any other act, whether of the minister, the choir, or the congregation. So with the rest of the prayers. They have each a well-defined and characteristic use in the organism of our worship ; and should be kept to that use. Now this rule is violated very often. At a funeral not long ago, in a family of which I am the pastor, a brother clergyman was requested to commence the service with an invocation and reading of the Scriptures ; leaving to me (as was suitable) the Pastoral Prayer, the only remaining act of the occasion. And he started. And his prayer was at least ten minutes long, marching out with a leisurely fulness into all the mentionable circumstances of the case, including an express notice of each person or class of the near kinsmen of the deceased, together with such general reflections as I myself had hoped to make, but was now in common decency cut off from. As I am gifted with a certain amount of faculty for amplification on a small stock of material, I did not feel myself utterly bankrupted by this raid into my territories ; but I did feel that that blessed brother did not sense the natural proportions and eternal harmonies and boundary-lines of things ; especially as on reaching the grave, and being invited by me to offer a short prayer, he once more mentioned all the relatives, separately, and otherwise conformed himself to the dimensions of the broad landscape and the infinite open air in the midst of which we stood.

Now such practices as that are exceedingly wearisome and unjustifiable. All persons who have a sharp discernment of what is suitable are offended by them, as well as tired out ; while the undiscerning feel a staleness creeping over them, though knowing not what it means. Often they attribute it to their depraved lack of interest in religion. But it is not that !

And, speaking of weariness, under a repetitious presentation of

the same thing, I am reminded that some seem to think that a service lacks full unity and a truly deep impression, unless the key-note of it be thoroughly sounded in the first utterance of the minister, (the invocation) and be kept sounding all through to the final amen. The first hymn must sound it—and all the hymns. The Scriptural lessons must be selected to carry it on. And each succeeding prayer must be full of its flavors. I was present at the administration of the Lord's Supper one day, and although the first hour was to be spent in prayers, hymns, and sermonizings, prefatory to the Supper, yet the invocation of the minister took us immediately into the heavy stress of the table, in an extended, wrestling, deep-toned way; and as completely as though we had already arrived at the table itself; so completely in fact that in the nature of the human mind, we, the congregation, could not make any advance thereafter in our feeling, and hardly in our thought. We had struck twelve (all the sensitive ones of us had) and thenceforth we dwindled, or at best, merely held our own;—for every act of the entire hour was made by the minister to have that same central emphasis; an emphasis which could be endured only about so long, I repeat; the constitution of man being so made that, with a fine instinct of self-preservation, it unloads impression when it has enough of it, and subsides into a wholesome indifference. Now I maintain, that that brother was wrong in thus starting his journey at his highest speed. I do not like to use the word Art, in connection with the ordering of divine service, as I have said to you several times before, but there are laws of art which must be observed, if the service is not to be made more or less a failure. For example, if that leader of our worship on the day I mention, had made his invocation simply invocatory of God's blessing on that assembly in their approaching various acts; and if the hymn that followed had had no respect to the Holy Supper, but had spread itself in general praise, or had celebrated the Sunday as the day of the resurrection of our Lord; and if the Biblical Lesson that then came on had been selected, not from the intense Scriptures of sacrifice, (the Scriptures that are so full of the mediatorial travail of the Son of God,) but from more general passages, leaving those more particular texts to be used at the moment of approach to the Supper; in short, if our leader had even for the whole hour held us a little off from the precious crisis of the occasion, in various preambles, all within the lines of Christianity of course—yes, and more than that within the lines of

interior and central Christianity, so that we might be in a process of real preparation for the feast ; then two fundamental things would have been effectually secured. First, that underflowing unity which is so precious in any service, and which he was after so earnestly ; and secondly, that unwasted vigor, that full and fresh play of faculty, on the part of the congregation, which makes the Lord's Supper a heart-filling and strengthening observance.

Perhaps some of you, My Brethren, will doubt my statement that unity in a service is secured by preambulings that do not come right to the main point. Well, look at the great Historical Liturgies and see how they are constructed. This notion of so many that the sermon is the great feature of the hour, and that all things before and after must chime about that, and from that get their color and tone, is not provided for in the Liturgies ; for they move on in their diverse exercises, in a free, multifold and unhindered way, as though real acts of worship, though they be of a general nature, were a good and sufficient preparation of the heart for listening to any sort of sermon that deserves to be preached. Take the Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church and observe how that undertakes to get its congregations on to the Lord's Supper. Why, during the first hour, more or less, no one who was not informed beforehand, would surmise that the supper was coming at all ;—and then, when it does come, the first stroke of the ritual is as far off as the reading of the ten commandments ; then comes a prayer, also far off ; then the collect for the day, which may have a special flavor of Christ's Sacrifice or may not, just as it happens ; then the Epistle and the Gospel for the day, (for the day you notice, and not for the sacramental occasion ;) then a Creed is read, a Creed suitable to any service of course ; then, after a little, a most general prayer for the Christian church is offered ;—and finally, after all this, notes from the Holy table begin to break in. Now I do not stand here to eulogize these details and pronounce them perfect ; but only to put forth the observation, that the great liturgical bodies of Christendom have practically expressed themselves to this effect ; that, in order to have all the specific acts of a Christian service proceed upon a fundamental tone, and in that tone have their perfect unity, and therefore their utmost impression, it is not necessary that they should be so exceedingly particularized as my friend who led us in the Communion service that day particularized. And I have no doubt that this great consenting judgment is



right, and that any practice contrary to that judgment is injurious.

I may seem to you, to be spending a good deal of time on a minor point, just here ; but if I could run the subject out into all its relations, I might make it appear less minor than you think. If we submit ourselves to the perpetual drill of a routine which is unphilosophically organized, we may save our souls, to be sure ; but we shall be insensibly cheated out of some benefits which we might just as well have. Indeed I think there are forms of piety in the world partially disagreeable and unprofitable, which came to be so as developed under this theory of concentration and particularization, whereon I have been remarking. Give us a broad, diversified rational service ; and not too much music on one string for the sake of impression. My remark sometime ago, that the three prayers in our service should be kept distinct, led me to speak of weariness of mind under them when they are all run together pretty much, and cover the same ground ; and from that I was induced to spend a moment on the weariness and lack of impression of a service, which in its endeavor for unity makes its every act, beginning with the invocation, sound alike.

And, now, still confining myself to the prayers, I would like to consider the "long prayer," and throw out some hints in regard to public prayer in general.

And first, while you keep on calling the long prayer "long" if you want to, do you be very watchful that it never deserves that sonorous adjective. Soon after I commenced ministerial service, I was told of a neighboring brother who prayed fifteen, twenty and twenty-five minutes, almost any Sunday, and had been known to go as high as thirty-five, on a sufficiently august occasion. I, in my inexperience, lifted up my hands in amazement. I could not see what he could have to say to keep him so long, or how he ventured to call the congregation to an effort on their own part so extended. But in less than four years I was wiser ; and found that I, myself, was almost equally affluent, and was being timed by brethren who were not so devout but that they could look at their watches ; and not so awe-struck before the minister but that they could tell him of it. So I commenced to reform, supposing that all I had to do was to say the word to myself and the thing was done, but, behold ! the force of habit, and the force, too, of a deep interest, intellectual and other, in the mighty themes of prayer, and the mighty blessings which prayer goes out to seek ; I did not much reform. Good reso-

lutions availed little. The moment I closed my eyes and began, time was cheap. However much it might be worth thinking of, as a matter of fact I did not think of it, or at least not enough to frighten myself and stop. Then I undertook praying by the watch, putting it at my side, looking at it as I commenced, and looking at it again as I closed ; but in spite of everything, it registered usually fifteen minutes or more. After a sufficient trial of this, I made up my mind to deliberately omit numbers of things which really belong in any full prayer, for the sake of getting through. I would sacrifice my idea of prayer and work in only a fraction of its rightful contents, rather than destroy my prayer altogether as an exercise for the people, by making it burdensome ; just as a man loads so many thousand tons into his ship instead of twice as many, because he judges it better to get across the ocean with three thousand than to sink with ten. But, strange to say at first, the two or three items of prayer to which I confined myself, under my handling, expanded to ten thousand tons ;—the secret of that being (I suppose) that in my sense of having shortened down my circle of topics, I felt it safe to amplify each one a little more and in the bliss of that amplification took no measure of time.

I must not be too long in giving you the details of this experience, but it ended in my getting a phonographic reporter to plant himself in my gallery, and take down my prayerful utterances verbatim, in order that I might see objectively what I had been about all those fifteen or twenty minutes. For on running them over in simple recollection, I could not understand by what meanderings or other leisurely works I had succeeded in being gone so long. This reporter brought me to my senses. There was the whole thing in black and white, and I recognized the prints of my own feet, and the earmarks of my own diction, all the way. I was a convicted sinner, and I started out in a still more energetic repentance ; and I want to say for your encouragement, that in due time I brought myself within what I conceive to be proper limits in this very important part of public worship ;—so that, three or four years ago, when a certain gentleman, in my congregation, timed me on Sunday mornings for three months or more, it was found that ten minutes was my maximum swing. I confess though, with mortification, that I have not ability enough to condense into ten minutes, or less, all the particulars of a truly encyclopedic prayer—that is all that belongs in a “common” prayer (as our Protestant Episcopal

friends call it.) Neither do I consent to be confined to such brevity on all occasions ; but I make that general aim ; and I do not do it in mere cowardice before an impatient and unleisurely generation, who insist that everything shall be short, sharp and decisive, (a kind of touch-and-go-movement even in our holiest things, the newspaper article being the divine model for the minister ;) but I am constrained to strive for a certain brevity, as convinced that the nineteenth century sincerely cannot pray more than ten minutes or so. It can keep its head down and be respectful twice that time ; but its mental exercise for the last half of the same it were unprofitable to explore.

Now, My Brethren, I bear down on this thing, and give you my experience and beseech you to be brief, because you are certainly on your way to have your feelings hurt unless you take counsel, and begin your career with a conscience in the matter of brevity. It seemed a sort of sacrilege to me when people began to animadvert on the length of my prayers ; but they kept on all the same, (never harshly though, in a single instance,) and by-and-by I went over to their side, and have had a comfortable amount of peace ever since.

But I wish you to understand, I do not deliver this exhortation in behalf of brevity, because I am sympathetic with those people who would squeeze the worship of the church to death, in order that the sermon may have room to magnify itself almost without limit. We, on the one hand, and our liturgical brethren on the other, are still in the midst of the old debate, which shall be the hub of the wheel ; the worship or the sermon ; but we are not so far apart on it as we used to be ; and the growing opinion among us now is, that while the sermon is not to be belittled, the worship is to be amply provided for, more amply in some respects than in the old times. And following in the line of this opinion, I insist that the sermon shall take heed unto itself, and call a halt (on all ordinary occasions) not very far beyond thirty minutes. Let it aim at thirty, and if, at the end, it finds itself in a genuine gale, a true wind from Heaven, and cannot stop, why nobody will want it to. Let it sail on. But I notice that these heaven-born winds are generally willing to be reasonable and let a congregation off in about half an hour.

In my efforts to shorten my sermons in order that worship may have fair scope, I have found it very serviceable to me, to keep

before my mind numbers of considerations like the following. First, that in the course of my ministrations year after year, it is not necessary that I should exhaust the subject I happen to be handling at any one time. If I have thoroughly studied it, I have discovered a good many important points in it; and partly because they are important and partly because I myself have discovered them and do therefore have the feelings of a mother towards them, it is a bitterness to me not to bring them all into my discourse. Moreover, it is an affliction to my taste, as an intellectual man, to make only half a statement of a subject; like a snatch of music from a grand oratorio. But I remember that I am a settled pastor, and (God willing) am to have other chances at that same subject, so that in the course of time I can get my whole oratorio moving, and give my congregation the advantage of it;—a mutilated advantage you may be inclined to say, because they have not taken it in all at once; and yet not very mutilated I fancy. For not half of them are disciplined sufficiently to take anything in its entirety at one effort. And in the next place, while I may be painfully conscious of omissions in my treatment of my subject because I have carefully looked it all through, they (as not having done that) do not feel any omissions. It sounds to them like the whole oratorio. In the Easter Service in my church last Sunday morning, my sermon had five heads; but the choir and I had done so many things, and had been so long about it, that I was compelled to omit the first four. Nevertheless that fifth head I found had marched out into the air as though all the preceeding four were sounding therein. Nobody seemed able to imagine that anything had been left out. I presume there were reverberations of those departed and invisible four heads running through that fifth one, because I wrote the fifth as energized and fructified by my preceding converse with the four;—and that is true of all our sermonizing. We make a full study of a theme, and then deliver only half our thoughts on it, or less; but in that half, our entire preparation resounds. Three years ago, at the installation of a pastor, I heard one of my brethren deliver an extended charge to the people, and the other evening, at another installation, I heard him deliver it again. But as he was crowded into a late hour by me and others who had preceded him, he was compelled to abbreviate his deliverance; badly, he thought; and he told me beforehand that he felt unhappy. He shortened it fully one half I should say. But I did.

not miss anything. And I venture to say, nobody in that house missed anything—excepting always himself. He did not give us the whole loaf ; only a slice ; and of course, such a proceeding as that is grievous to the feelings of a generous man. He felt mean, but the fact was, the whole taste of his loaf was in that slice. His entire mind was in it, his spirit, his magnetism, his love of God and man, his whole feeling about the relations of a people to their pastor. So, friends and fellow-brethren, whenever I feel that I have done injustice to a subject and perhaps bereaved my people, by a partial presentation of it, I recover myself by reflecting that I am to have other opportunities to preach on it, most likely ; and that meanwhile in what limited bread I have distributed, there is the identical smack of the loaf.

And that reminds me to say, that it greatly assists us to brevity in sermonizing, to omit all those preliminary skirmishings about our subject, (like General McClellan's famous earth-works creeping slowly up the Yorktown peninsula towards Richmond, in the days of our war ;) to omit all these skirmishings, I say, which have not in them the real heart-beat and quintessence of the subject, and are only like the dry burr on a nut ; to omit them, and make a straight march for the center, and give the people the very relish of the thing in the first sentence if possible. That saves a great deal of time and does no damage either.

Another thought wherewith I have comforted myself in my efforts to be brief is, that my people neither require nor need that I should consume much time in giving them the processes of my thought, the steps by which I arrive at results. What they most need are results ; assertions from a man who has looked the case up and knows what he is saying. I am making haste along here, and cannot expound this idea as I would like, and put in suitable qualifications ; but I look back and see that in the first years of my sermonizing (to say nothing of later days,) I wasted a good deal of my time in the pulpit, and a good deal of the time of the people, in mapping before them minutely the path of my own mind through the subjects. I made lengthy arguments in support sometimes of axioms and sometimes of truths, which, although not axioms exactly, yet, for all purposes practical and popular, are better argued by an outright statement glowing with the heat of personal experience. There is that in the constitution of mankind which responds to the main affirmatives of the Christian religion. Say Sin,



and every human soul echoes your word. Say God, say Eternity, say Sorrow, say Jesus, and put it home with the weight of your personal knowledge, and how can wire-drawn reasonings, and philosophizings and goings to Richmond by a circuit of half the continent, add anything to it. So much on keeping the sermon within proper dimensions with a view to give worship a large place.

My second remark on prayers (whether long or short) is, that in them we should conceive God very distinctly, and make our whole movement out towards Him. I sometimes almost think it would be better to have before our eyes a visible representation of God in such form as reverent art has been able to devise ; and on that form, idealized and transfigured perhaps, by our holy imagination, fix our eyes and there hold while we pray ; this, rather than to be conscious chiefly of the congregation, and have half our prayer just a speech to them. A parishioner of mine in one of our conference meetings, went into such a deep and absorbed movement of prayer, that (for quite a space) he entirely forgot the rest of us all about him, and continually used language that implied that he was alone, as in the privacy of his room. That seems hardly the thing to do, but I submit, that ignoring the congregation in prayer is better than ignoring God, especially as prayer is ostensibly an address to God, and not an address to man at all. I think that God, from his stand-point in the Heavens, is more pleased with a man-ward lapse of memory than a God-ward ; and is more likely to grant a request that goes straight to its mark in that concentrated and absorbed way.

The advantages of a clear vision of God in prayer, and an absolutely resolved holding of the mind to Him, and never dropping to the assembly, are such as these. It lifts you above all human fright—which is apt to be rather severe sometimes in a young and inexperienced man, especially if he be constitutionally timid. It produces in you just that self-abasement which is not only suitable in prayer, but necessary if it is to be true prayer, and to bear in upon God's mind effectually. It rules down your diction to a godly simplicity, saving you from oratory, and rhetorical vamping, and all those posturings, and tones and tremendous originalizations, which are fitted to catch the ear of men but are most unseemly in anything that professes to be prayer ; and which in addition to that, render it impossible for the congregation to follow you in any other way than they follow an oration. They may be greatly entertained and greatly

stimulated, both intellectually and religiously, by prayers of the sort that I am criticising ; but as for praying under such a lead, they cannot. Perhaps numbers of them will think they do, (not having analyzed the matter,) and perhaps whole congregations, under the pernicious education of a favorite minister, may come to feel that prayer is hardly worth listening to, unless it puts itself forth in fresh and ingenious expressions, in touches of fancy, in exuberant illustrations, and in re-statements of Christian Doctrine that are brand-new and unprecedented ; but their view is sufficiently shown up by asking the one question : Are such outpourings fitting if conceived as actually addressed to God, and in so far as a praying man senses God, can he—in the nature of things, can he—use such devices of expression? No, he cannot. He will be burdened by the awful presence wherein he stands, and the solemn personal business that sends him into that presence, and his utterance will be simple, and lowly and not too profuse.

I wish now to speak of a few things that tend to full, various, rich, easy, and right-flavored prayer, on the part of the minister leading his congregation. And first, I should advise much familiarity with the Catholic Liturgies ;—with the liturgies, I mean, of the Church general. I think it is a wholesome thing to read them and study them habitually, especially for a young minister, who, as being young, has not yet formed his habits. He need not go under any bondage to them. He need not publicly use them in form. If, at any point, they savor of doctrinal or ecclesiastical theories which he ought not to accept, very well, let him be on his guard against them. But let him read them, again and again ; and catch their devout spirit and suffuse his mind with their seemly phraseologies ; and indoctrinate himself in the broad variety of their worshipful acts, and feed his religious imagination on their old-time precious associations, hearing in them, as he may, the voice of long-gone generations, the innumerable millions of God. They will insensibly chasten his taste, mold his style, bring his extemporaneous doings into orderliness, abate his eccentricities, and make him a man whom it will be a means of grace to be led by in public worship. That will be their tendency at least, if they are used judiciously and with discrimination.

Then again, I think that a minister would do well to consider his public prayers beforehand, if he would have them what they should be. If I am asked : should he write them? I say no ;—

much less memorize them. On special occasions let a man do what seems to him best, and let the rest of us not pick at him much. But as a general rule, it seems to me decidedly, that the wisest way for us unliturgical ministers, is to premeditate our prayers, and prearrange them in their outlines and headlands; and leave all the rest to the moment. Prearrangement secures brevity. Prearrangement and premeditation secure thoughtfulness, and save us from the waft of accidental sidewinds as we go on in our prayer, (like unforeseen and unmanageable spurts of emotion, and sudden ideas which, as being sudden, fascinate us, and swing us off into digressions of whose meanderings and outcome nobody can be sure;) and prearrangement also saves us from omissions that ought not to be made. The only danger in premeditation, that occurs to me now is, that it may destroy our spontaneity, and make us feel as though we were speaking a piece; or searching for our prayer in a corner of our pocket. Of course if our preparation is quite elaborate and formal, it tends strongly to that bondage; a bondage which I should advise you never to submit to. Let your preparation be less formal. Do as I often do (if you cannot do any better) namely, digest the Scriptural lesson which you are going to read, until you are full of its vitality; and make your prayer start from that lesson and there have its roots. Somehow, I find there is a reality in that kind of start; my mind comforts itself in it, and seems to have a real business on hand; and although it might seem that your prayer, thus born, would have too much local color and not reach the full sweep of prayer; that is, not get in all its elements, and all the proper details—as for example, if you root in some ringing imprecatory Psalm, how shall your prayer get over into Christianity and there expatiate as it ought—nevertheless, as a matter of fact, I never saw a Scripture yet that was not a good enough starting-point. The old Bible is full of one blood. Prick it anywhere and you have struck its inmost reservoirs of vitality. Or, if that figure be not quite accurate, then let me say, that a truly christianized mind turns everything that it touches into honey, and especially cannot fail while ranging the manifold clover-gardens of Holy Writ.

Again, much private prayer makes public prayer a veritable divine thing; and a right thing every way. I affirm unqualifiedly that a public praying that does not rest back on habitual prayer, is always a less solid, deep-moving, fresh, diversified, effectual and

fructifying thing, than it ought to be. O ! how important this is, and how I ought to dwell on its deep import !

Still again, pastoral visitation makes a good leader of worship. How can a man be self-conscious and formal, in his prayer, and full of flighty excursions of rhetoric, and an ear-catching minister everyway, when he knows by having been into the houses all about, that down in yonder seat before him is a mother in agony over her wayward son ; and over there a person feeling his way along anxiously to the light ; and yonder a family heart-stricken by bereavement ; and there a man so poor that he cannot sleep nights ; and beyond, another so spiritually insensible and lost that you do not know but he is lost forever ; and all about in front of you, men and women in full bloom for the heavenly life, whose faces are a benediction, and whose thanksgivings you want to voice in your prayer. The innumerable touch of human hearts makes a good prayer, I say.

Once more, a profoundly Scripturalized mind makes a good prayer. We cannot use liturgies much ; therefore let us use the Bible ; memorize its passages, season ourselves with its doctrines, enrich ourselves with its imageries, read and study its wonderful histories, consort with its illustrious personages, live in its poetry, domesticate ourselves in its old Ritual, analyze its texts and single words, and find how vital they are to the last shred and atom, and how they magnetize and empower the mind ;—then shall our worship move on, as in the most robust and historic of liturgies ;—our thought will be charged with the authentic flavors of God, and our language seem heaven-born sometimes ; for it shall go to the heart as being redolent of the one and only universal Book.

Finally, and as underlying all the rest ; all prayer has the privilege of being in the Holy Ghost ; and is prayer in proportion only as it is thus originated and sustained. Many well-intentioned ministers do not seem to fully understand this. Theoretically they admit it, but in their practice they do not quite launch out into its mid-waters. Possibly rationalism has palsied them a little, (some of them) so that they are scarcely more than speculative supernaturalists. Possibly they are shy of letting into their life the full doctrine of the Holy Ghost, because they have seen instances of wildfire. Possibly, in some Communion, they have gone over to externalisms too much, making them the vehicles of God's grace pre-eminently, and not so much dwelling on his direct and subjective

approach to the soul. Of course, all these classes of men have their plausibilities to present, and some truths ; and I should like to display their logic for them here to-day, and see what reply I could make. But, in lieu of that, I lift up the experience, the holy inspired experience of innumerable men, who have preached, and prayed, and led their assemblies many and many a time, and thousands of them habitually, in a fulness of the spirit of God which has carried them above the fear of man, as the stars range the sky, and has let them into great sweeps of liberty, and great visions of truth, and great confidences of faith, and great victories over the minds committed to their care. So that when a man has once entered into this experience, all rationalistic or other arguments designed to show that ministers had better be calm-minded, and careful, and reliant mainly on a plodding conscientious use of their own faculties, and their much learning, and their oratory, and their culture ; all that line of thought and talk, I say, rolls off from him like pebbles from iron-clads. While a committee of the English Parliament were demonstrating to the world that steam roads were impossible, Stephenson was getting one ready, and running it. There was the argument on the one hand, and there was the road on the other. The argument was first-class, so good that I presume some of the committee stood by it till they died ; but the people who consented to try the road never cared much for that argument afterward. Experience is better than all the Parliamentary Committees on earth.

And, My Young Brethren, I advise you to seek an experience of God's supernatural and direct empowerment for your work, the moment you begin it ;—not a half-and-half experience, but one that shall go to the bottom of the subject and settle it in your mind for all time, and forever.

I have now spoken to you of the prayers in public worship. The minister's management of the other parts, as hymns and music, and choirs, and the use of the Scriptures, is a subject for another address. I presume you would all be glad to have me give you a recipe for managing choirs. And, on the other hand, your choirs would like to get from me a recipe for managing you. I do not know but I should be a good enough man for advising you, because in twenty-eight years of service I have never had a single quarrel with a choir. I do not think a minister needs to be a technical musician in order to stand supreme over the worship of song in his



church. If he is thoroughly grounded in the eternal principles of worship (as every man may be, and should be), and continually shows it by his manner of conducting the worship, on occasions both ordinary and special, and by his wise discussions of the subject from time to time ; then his weight with his people will be such that they will follow him and not the choir, in any question, or difference, where fundamental principles and good taste are involved. Of course, if he is by nature an intermeddler and a picayune Pope, with no tact to deal with men, his choir will be likely to make him unhappy now and then ; as will also his whole congregation for that matter. And probably they ought to. But if he bears rule in God's house a little as a good mother does in her realm, that is with an affectionate firmness, and also with a timely blindness to numerous small irregularities which are only skin-deep, and are not worth calling a court-martial upon, he will be more likely to move on, and hold his seat in the saddle, forever.

But I had better pass all this, and conclude with some running observations on the state of things liturgically in our churches, and the possibilities of improvement. Let me speak particularly of the Congregationalists. You will find, when you get among them, that they are resolutely attached to the old-fashioned ways, for substance ; but you will also find, I am sure, that they are more and more ready to receive and incorporate into their worship, this, that, and the other excellence of other Communion. They do not believe in a priesthood, they are not very energetic sacramentarians, they honestly think that prayers read are not the most useful ; they are watchful against any such advance of rites and ceremonies as will make formalists of them, and undermine the old Protestant doctrine of Justification by faith ; but there are numerous minor things (new things, for them) towards which they are beginning to be hospitable. The Cross, used as a symbol, does not much alarm them. They are importing into their music some of the old standard riches and practices of the church at large. They are quite widely diversifying the ancient order of their service ; insomuch that now when I exchange pulpits with a Congregational minister I always have to ask him what his particular practice is. Also, if a minister flushes up a little his ritual of the Lord's Supper, with a view to have the externals of a thing so significant and so precious correspond more nearly with the thing itself, and more forcibly address the feeling of the congre-

gation ; they are likely to put up with it. I think there is a distinct advance among us on the doctrine of a real presence of Christ in the Supper ; and that on that account it is feasible to introduce some expansion of ritual at the table, and some new emphasis. Whether these expansions are really profitable, I do not now discuss. I only say they are practicable ; as has been already proved in numerous cases. Perhaps my own church is an extreme illustration of limberness in these matters (though I fancy there are many a good deal like it in our cities) ;—but in that church there are I do not know how many things done that did not use to be, and could not be. Not that I have labored with them very much, though I touch the matter now and then, but if an innovation seems to me really good, and not inconsistent with any essential feature of our Congregational system, I slip it in sparingly, on my own authority, and let it speak for itself. I am pretty careful to set on foot only what will speak for itself, in actual use. If you call a mass-meeting of your church to discuss whether the Apostles' Creed shall be introduced in the congregation ever, or whether a book shall ever be used at the Communion table, or whether there shall be any back and forth of responses between the minister and the choir ; in every case some man will be found to object, and there you are. But if you have their confidence to this extent that they will endure the first sensation of a new thing, put in on your own wisdom, and if it so happens that you have the wisdom to select the best things, and the easiest, and the most beautiful, and those most commended by long use in other branches of God's church, and if you have the patience to hold back numbers of things that you think excellent, and not swamp the people by your inventions brought in flood-wise, then in course of time you may establish in your congregation almost anything that you desire ;—that is, unless you are out-and-out an uncongregational man—in which case you ought to leave the denomination. Some of you here present will never have any impulse to introduce deviations from the primitive way of our churches, but others of you will, just as sure as you live ; and our Congregational system is elastic enough to accommodate you, most likely.

As an illustration, let me give you the order of the Easter services at my church last Sunday morning :—I do not consider it a triumph of holy art at all, for it is visibly unphilosophical at one or two points, on account of the stress of certain circumstances that

were upon me. It opened with introductory services by the minister :—"How amiable are thy tabernacles," and the like. Then followed the invocation. Then the Venite :—"O come let us sing unto the Lord," the minister reading one verse, and the choir chanting the other. Then the first Scripture lesson, an account of the Resurrection of Christ, by St. John, followed by a corresponding anthem of the Resurrection. Then the second lesson (1st Cor., xv), followed by an anthem which amplified upon the theme of that incomparable chapter. Then half a dozen texts were read, in relation to Christian faith, and confessing that faith, whereupon the choir intoned the Apostles' Creed. Then I spent a few moments in what to me was a most sweet and holy commemoration of those who have departed in the faith of the Resurrection. I took the substance of it from the liturgy of the Catholic Apostolic Church years ago, adapting it to our needs. I have no time to repeat it, but it went on in this way :—

First, I read a Scriptural selection which began :—"I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep." Next, I made a general mention of the saintly dead, to which the choir responded in a solemn Amen.

Next, I mentioned them in several classes, with a like choral response to each. Those classes were the Old Testament saints, and the immediate fore-runners of the Lord ; the mother of the Lord, the Apostles, the Evangelists and Pastors, the martyrs and confessors, that succeeded ;—and, finally, those of our own church who had left us during the year, their names being solemnly repeated, and the choir following with these words :—"May they rest in thy peace, and awake to a joyful resurrection." Then came a congregational hymn :—"Let saints below in concert sing, with those to glory gone."

After that the service swung back into its general path again and there were prayer, responsive reading of the Psalter by the minister and the congregation, a Gloria Patri ; a collection, with offertory sentences, (which sentences are sometimes delivered by the minister alone, and sometimes by the minister and choir in alternation), a hymn, a sermon only fifteen minutes long, because what went before had been uncommonly protracted, a hymn again, sung by the congregation. and then the benediction.

Now every year, on special days, like Easter, and Christmas, and Thanksgiving, I have sent to me from Congregational pastors,

and Presbyterians, and Baptists, printed special programmes, analogous to that which I have just recited in your hearing ;—which shows to me that there is at least a scattered liturgical movement among us (as you may call it). I have no idea that we are on the way to the introduction of a liturgy proper ; [there are profound reasons why that will never come to pass ;] but I am sure that within certain normal limits our ancient service is to be diversified and enriched, the present individual instances of that being multiplied far and wide.

Years and years ago I heard a Congregational pastor telling of a sermon which he had recently heard in New York, from a well-know Protestant Episcopalian, on the reasons for the exact order of the successive acts in the worship of that church. And this Congregationalist remarked with much contempt on the insignificance of such a pulpit theme as that. He ridiculed such topics as “debilitating topics.” That is what he called them. And I recollect that I at the time had a certain amount of sympathy with him in his view.

By which circumstance I am reminded that some in this assembly may think that the present lecturer has spent a good deal of time to-day, and on points, some of which at least, are so subordinate and minute, as to be open to that ridicule involved in that word, debilitating. Nevertheless, I stand fast in my conviction that so small a matter as the law of before and after in the ongo of public worship, the reason that one act comes here, another there and another there and not otherwise, is abundantly worth discoursing upon, even as God discoursed to Moses on the precise details of the Jewish tabernacle and its worship ; and that our congregations cannot have the advantage of a full-toned cultus if the study of that subject is belittled. The masses of the people cannot be expected to be students of the subject. They sail round and round in the routine which is provided for them ; thanking God and making no complaint so long as their prepossessions are not jostled, [and who can describe the endless riches of holy nurture which they receive] but we, the ministers, ought to be students of the subject, in order that our churches may be rationally defended against the enormous and increasing pressure of the great ritualistic bodies of Christendom (their doctrinal pressure and their liturgical pressure), and at the same time may have the intelligence and the catholicity to receive from those bodies whatever contributions of thought or worship may profitably be incorporated into our system.

## LIBERTY OF THOUGHT WITHIN CONGREGATIONALISM.

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When I stood about where you do, my Brethren, I had an anxiety like this :

I began to study theology under the doctrinal prepossessions of my religious training, as we all do, and it seemed to me that candor required I should now disengage myself from those prepossessions, and address myself to all inquiries in that beautiful blankness and innocency of intellect in which our great original father, Adam, was, when he landed in this strange world. I had hitherto believed in a God, and did yet, but a knowing class of men had always contended that there is no such Being, so I must wrench myself if possible into a totally judicial position and throw upon my instructors the task of showing me, in my assumed ignorance, that there is a God. And the whole system of Christian truth must similarly validate itself before my unbiased mind. So, I came to this Seminary rather than to any other, in part, because I had an idea that Dr. Nathaniel Taylor here, took contracts of that sort and enjoyed them.

I cannot conscientiously recommend to other men this attempted philosophical impartiality of mine. It had its uses, but it had its mischief. We have no right to disavow our pious training and our personal experience of God, even to the extent of temporary non-committalism ; neither do I believe it can be defended on philosophical grounds.

However, I was in constant fear that I should somehow lose this philosophical balance of mine. Some teacher might get in on me with his seductions. Or some tenderness towards my father



and mother, now away from me, might undermine my thinking. Of course, as I went on, I accepted a goodly list of things as proven ; so that I was willing to undertake a Christian pastorate, and did ; but I knew several things even then whereon I doubted, or in which I did not believe in just that complete and enthusiastic way that I desired. So, now, my fear was that the position of a preacher and pastor, with its obligations to a pretty full orthodoxy, and its fine advantages of all sorts, which I certainly should not want to forfeit by any too great freedom and independence of inquiry, would incessantly and insidiously operate on me as a bribe to conformity, and make me non-judicial, thus vitiating all my thinking and disintegrating the foundations of my manhood. In fact, I sincerely thought myself in some peril at that point. And so my first years of service were years of self-watchfulness, and perhaps of inordinate self-assertion, as against this supposed liability to encroachment.

Now I am going to speak to-day to that state of mind, thinking it not unlikely to be here before me full-blown or in the bud. I shall say certain things which it would have done me good to hear in that early time from a man who had been in the world and among the churches long enough to discover how matters go on out there. I have been exposed to that tremendous danger for thirty years and I still live and I have never felt freer in my life, intellectually, than I do now. That is the simple truth, my young friends ; and I will explain it to you.

First, I found that our Congregational churches concede to their ministers—well, sometimes even an indefensible amount of liberty, as it would seem to me. I have preached everything that I wanted to ; everything that seemed to me true and entitled to a place in the pulpit. No committee ever visited me to tame me down to their own views of things ; or beg that I would reef in, in my speculations on the wide ocean of the doubtful or the unknowable. I sailed to all points of the compass, and landed on all distant shores, wherever the excursive impulse took me and I seriously thought it my duty ; only one man ever made a formal call upon me in the interest of more prudence. He was a good man, and particularly ignorant, and naturally circumscribed, and representing nobody on earth but himself. He treated me well, and I treated him well and extracted profit from his talk and loved him till God took him.

No doubt you must get into your teaching the substance of

the Christian religion. You must show that you are not exploring to the ends of the earth under a sheer vagabond impulse, but in the interest of truth. You must concede to the people the same liberty that they concede to you, and not conceive of your pastorate as a lordship and practical right of tyranny. You must make it plain that you are after their welfare, whatever you say or do. Take heed unto these few, obvious things, and then no man in the world, who holds himself under any responsibility at all to other people, is freer than you are as a Congregational minister. That is my experience.

Again, I have attended ecclesiastical councils these many years, as faithfully as any other man, and of the scores, young and old, whom I have seen appear before these bodies for ordination and for installation, I never knew but one to be rejected, and he lost his case because he had not character enough to carry him through. As a theologian he was a fair success and would have been set in office by a unanimous vote. Occasionally I have seen individual votes recorded in the negative, and in one instance the majority for the candidate was but one, while after the council was dissolved a stricter count seemed to show that the body did really divide exactly in the middle. But no matter, he went in. Also on the far horizon I have heard reverberations of negative majorities, as in this city within a year; and in other States over the hills and far away, but near enough to be suggestive; still these adverse majorities are as exceptional as cyclones and earthquakes, and, unlike cyclones, they are often mitigated by facts like these:—the majority in the negative is small;—or it is numerical and not moral; or the majority leaves on record so many cordialities towards the defeated man that he is almost more in honor than he would have been under the glorification of a major vote; or the church which had sought him is so confident of its own right judgment on his merits, and is in such a state of Christian exasperation withal, that it proceeds, right or wrong, to secure his services as though nothing had happened. It took us till midnight to reject that one minister whom I saw rejected, and he was backed by such a high-wrought multitude of free-born Congregationalists that all of us, members of the council, whose home was in other cities, took the earliest train next morning out of those parts—and then that multitude had an installation of their own;—their deacons and other chief men took it in hand, and performed the necessary offices and duties at

the service ; and so the choice of that people was triumphantly fulfilled. And a thoroughly foolish piece of business it was, as they themselves discovered at last. Congregationalism seems to have these little contrivances in the interest of liberty, or is made to have. In one case within my knowledge, a council pronounced against the installation of a man, on the ground of theological confusedness, and did it by a strong vote ; but the people immediately called another council, the old one and much more, and by that council the man was successfully brought to the haven where he would be. And the association of ministers to which I belong, licensed a young man (I think, unanimously) who had just been refused by another association for theological reasons. A discussion arose outside, on the comity of that proceeding, as there reasonably might, even as that second council which over-rode its predecessor was discussed, as it also reasonably might be, but no one was killed in either case, and the succeeding ministry of both of those men indicated that somehow, and sooner or later, they should have been put into service. In another case it might not happen so, but in this case it did. It is an entertaining sight, sometimes, to see the way men among us get their liberty. Congregationalism has some fine old expedients for heading off interlopers ; but it is not often that a good and substantially sound man of our order is really abused.

If he is young, earnest, and interesting at all, most likely some old minister of renown and weight will have his bowels of compassion moved in his behalf, and will defend him, before the council and before the public. A candidate whom I wanted to vote against, and thought I might, had a hearty champion in Dr. Joel Hawes, a man of divinity, as careful and sound and respected as you could find. On another occasion, where I was present, an equally respectable minister burst forth in indignation at what he considered the pettifogging and hectoring attempts of certain councilmen to reduce a young candidate to his ultimate atoms, and, perhaps, in the last analysis show him to be unsound.

Gentlemen as you go out to your ministry and move along the years, if you are at all what you ought to be, you will find the country full of these natural defenders of you against any real wrong ;—sometimes they are men who have had to fight a fight themselves ; sometimes men who, although pretty full of theology are even more full of affection ; sometimes rational liberalists, and

again latitudinarians ; sometimes lowly, hard-working pastors whom the practical toils of life have taught that a large part of current theology is speculative, and not binding ; and again it will be some scholar who has not spent his life in parish service, but whose studious investigations have taught him the same thing ;—and then, back of all individual defenders, stand ever the great generous masses of the Church, with their rough and ready judgments, their quick recognition of character, and stamina, and high motives, and their fine inflammability on occasion.

I have no disposition to disparage the Congregational polity as a working system, but it has several excellent escapes for men who ought to escape. Some of these escapes were not intentionally provided by the generations who elaborated the system, but like seams in ships they open of themselves when the system falls into a rough sea of circumstances ;—open providentially, as some would say. Of course, reason declares that a ship like that must sink, but it is one of the features of this craft that it sails on, with an occasional open seam and parting of its timbers, about as well as any other—in practical safety, at all events. When a sociologist notices the thousands of incoherent and hap-hazard phenomena that emerge in human society, he might say that such a chaos and wide welter could work out no benefit whatever on the whole, and had better not be started at all ;—as, for example, how can there ever be any equilibrium of the sexes—numerical equilibrium—when each birth, in the sex of it, is such a pure fortuity ;—nevertheless, behold ! somehow this infinite jumble of all kinds works along into eventualities most orderly and benignant—the sexes are counted off as though some mathematician had that interest in hand ; and all other things are counted, measured, weighed, assorted, and manipulated with most excellent precision, as by a very discreet and million-handed somebody, ever at work just back of this visible, vast whirl, criss-cross, and heigh-ho of luck and disorder. Likewise, Congregationalism seems to some critics and anxious spectators, to have infirmities enough in its constitution to make it a failure the moment it is set running ; but just out of sight, somewhere, is a something or other that saves her. And I should like to give one lecture here on the prudential and conservative elements in Congregationalism. Again, within a few years it has come to be a fact that a majority of all our churches are served by men who were never put in their places by a council ;—another convenient

circumstance for those jealous for their own liberty of thought. Those of us who have been accustomed to the old way of councils of installation, dislike this new device, and think we can show why we dislike it ;—but here it is, beloved, and if any of you are concerned lest you be cramped in your freedom when you harness into our dear old system, there is a ray of light for you. No, you will not be cramped, any more than is good for you, and if you turn out a Methodist minister, you will not be. Please tell me how often there comes a trial for ministerial free-thinking in the Methodist, or the Baptist, or the Protestant Episcopal persuasions? And it is not because those bodies are getting loose, either, but rather that their ministers are practically sound. If you are a Presbyterian, the grip on you may be a little more strangling and dangerous, but if you find yourself coming to your last breath in that body, here outside are these other communions, with wide-open breathing for all the Presbyterians on earth, if only they will appreciate their opportunities and come over.

I have treated this subject of freedom in the Congregational Communion in a care-free spirit and without melancholy, as you have noticed, because I am convinced of two cheerful things ; first, that the schemes of prudence and reaction, which have been organized of late against whatever excessive freedom there may be among us, will not be permitted to endanger our liberties. This reaction may go to excess, it may billow and career, and toss up its foam ; it may raise a feeling within itself, that it is about to deluge the planet ; but there is in Congregationalism a rock-bound coast of Individualism, and local Church-Independency, on which these towering reactions are sure to dash and shatter when they get far enough.

Secondly, I am convinced that this shatter of the various contrivances of prudence and conservatism, will not end in license under the name of liberty. There will be scattered cases of top-heaviness, and vapoing and heresy, among our ministers—and among all ministers ;—but the bulk and body of us will retain our substantial sanity and our wholesome effect on the children of men. Taking us all together, we are a hard ship to wreck, as I said before.

So much have I put forth as fitted to soothe a young minister alarmed as to his liberty and as to the possible loss of his judicial temper ;—as I used to be. The churches will not oppress him.



Another thing I discovered, which tended to bring ease to my mind in regard to my doubts and my possible inability to be entirely conformed to what might be required of me, and in regard to my general peace in life, was that a thoroughly profound and satisfactory religious experience may be had by a man who is a good deal inexact in his philosophical religious thinking. For instance, it used to be thought that the sacrifice of Christ was a ransom paid to the Devil, who had us all. That was doctrine good enough in evangelical circles once, and the piety of pious men nourished itself on that view. It has been taught, in the same circles, that Christ in His passion endured exactly what we sinners would have been compelled to endure had He not interfered. It has been taught, too, by evangelical teachers, that while He did not endure the same that we must have done, He did endure the equivalent thereof. And so on. I need not mention all the fine thinking that has centered on that adorable mystery, the mediation of the Son of God. But under all these evangelical theories, human souls have had great gladness, great tenderness, great liberty and vigor and growth in all directions ;—and they have had this because those different hypotheses have all abundantly magnified the Redeemer and his work ; and in magnifying Him, have magnified by inevitable implication all the essentials of the Christian theology. As respects the mere matter of gratitude to Jesus Christ, with all of piety and salvation that that involves, either one of several evangelical modes of conceiving his sacrifice is as good as any other of the several. So then, we have great freedom in our philosophy of the Atonement. We are not compelled to settle it. We would like it settled, but we can live, and live to all eternity blessed for evermore, if it is not settled.

And the same is true of some other doctrines. There is a great struggle to get an infallible Bible. And there is a special anxiety at present concerning the final state of obstinate sinners. If it is not one thing we are wrestling on, it is another, and this never-ceasing human endeavor is full of uses ; but the substance of what the Infallibilist is after, is a Book that gives us—really gives us—God's way of salvation for men ;—and that we have, whether Infallibilism and the Infallibilists are true or not. There are several views of that Book besides his, several more or less important variations from his view, that are conservative of all necessary doctrine and conservative of all the main interests of the Kingdom of

God. And as regards the eternal doom of sinners, what we want is a view that does not diminish penalty beyond its maximum impression on men, and that is secured alike by several minor variations of doctrine.

I have struck a precarious line of thought here and ought to pursue it something farther, if I am to do it justice and make all snug and safe ;—but it must answer to say, as I have, that you provide for your release from a great deal of bondage when you discover the distinction between the substance of a doctrine, the thing therein that makes it valuable, and the philosophical formulation in which it happens to put itself forth for to-day. In the proposition *God is light*, it so happens that the three words are English. They might have been Spanish, or German, or Arabic, and they were Greek ; but who cares for the particular language in which they stand, if only in every language we get the fact back there in the nature of God, that He is Light, and in him is no darkness at all. So, the substance of the Atonement is that Jesus Christ somehow removed all difficulties whatever they were, on all sides, to our eternal and complete salvation ; and these refinings as to a ransom paid to Satan and so on, are but the man-made Greek, Spanish, and English, in which that glorious Fact, or Substance, is costumed. This Substance is binding on us and to fly from it is heresy and spiritual death, very likely ; but the terminology is not binding. Voice the Atonement, O man, in the philosophical tongue that suits you, and let no one abridge your liberty there.

A third discovery. I found that whereinsoever I was uncertain, doctrinally uncertain that is, as to the philosophy of doctrine, I might keep still about it ; still before my people, still before my brother ministers, except here and there a chosen soul, still everywhere and all the time. A young man is not apt to know that silence is very often his privilege. He cannot see why such a proceeding is not deception and duplicity. He wants his flag afloat in the upper air and not hidden in the darkness of his pocket. But may not men and ministers have some privacies ? This spirit of outrightness is beautiful and let us keep full of it so long as we live ; especially let preachers be brave and transparent, and let their congregations have the unconfusedness and comfort of feeling that they are so ; but we must have our outrightness confine itself to matters on which we have something to affirm. Now if a man has gone so far as to educate himself in theology, and put him-

self in some pulpit to preach ; presumably he has a list of things whereon he has got his foot firm down, so that he wants to preach them. It may be a small list, but it is sufficient to make him an affirmative man, and sound affirmative when he speaks, provided he, in his preaching, just keep within that list of beliefs. I agree with the frequent remark, that a preacher must not be a negative, nor even an agnostic ;—his general tone must be declarative and unqualified, rather than hesitating, or even deliberative ;—but a young man has not ripened to unqualifiedness on all points that ever occupied the human mind. He has not had time to think himself out into the largeness of the universe ; neither has he yet found his way into all godly experiences. Still, it is time for him to begin to preach. He cannot wait till he reaches full stature and is sixty or seventy years old. Moreover, the churches do not want him to wait. They like him while yet downy and callow and chirping.

But even now he has learned a few things. He has learned the doctrine of depravity and the helplessness of man ; his own heart has taught him that. And he has learned that there is a Redeemer. Out of his studies and out of his experience he has settled that. He has learned that there is a Hell and a Heaven ; he has been in them both. He has no doubt that God is, and holds men responsible. He believes the Bible a divine Book. He has found it so. He has looked out on the world and noticed that the Christian religion has force among men. He sees that the men of God must be organized in the Holy Ghost for God's work. He has had his communions with God. There are a score of points on which he is solid, and in some of them he is enthusiastic. Well, let him preach them. If he knew ten times as much as he does and had ten scores of points, instead of one, the one score that he now has would be the ones he ought to preach nearly all the time. The most mature affirmative theologian gets his affirmativeness from these very truths that this young man has already grasped ;—because they are the chief truths, they are the Christianity of Christianity ; they are the working forces of the Gospel. If only a man is full of the idea that Christianity is a supernatural religion—that alone, it carries enough in it to make him a powerful preacher ;—a man of faiths, and not an Agnostic, mooning forever in the vastness of his own dubiousness ;—a man in contact with whom other men are stimulated and helped in all the confusion and weariness of life, yea, helped on their way into the final glory of God. Why

consume Sunday time in opening your unsettled questions, when you have pulpit topics already more than you can ever get through ; —and those the essential topics, too? Why is it a part of manliness to proclaim your unconcluded thinkings on matters which it would not be supremely important to proclaim if they were concluded? Keep still, I say again. Have sense. An English gentleman traveling in this country for the first time, accompanying Dean Stanley, had spent his first Sunday in Boston, and had listened to one of our eminent preachers there, a man of several very mentionable gifts ; but what most impressed the Englishman, as he said, was that man's good sense. "After all," said he to me, "after all, the greatest quality in a minister is good sense." Possibly that has been said before by somebody, somewhere ; it rather sounds so, and yet it seems fresh, somehow. Have sense. I wish it did not take half a lifetime to get it.

A fourth important discovery that I made, and made a matter of ease to my mind, was with regard to creeds. I feared I might not be able to accept them sufficiently, and might be uncomfortably pressed towards acceptances from which I reluctantly, as I have already said. My church might press me. My denomination might press me. The importance of preserving my influence for good might lead me to Creed subscriptions that I was not up to with all my faculties. But when I came to see what sort of a thing a Creed is, in some respects, then I could sign an ample variety of them. A Creed is a storm-born child generally, and there are storm marks on it. If it had been born in pleasant weather ;—in the deliberativeness, meditateness, and tranquil undebative temper of peaceful sunshine, it would have been a spherical affair ; whereas, it is hemispherical, one-sided, a partial utterance. When a man says to me, good morning, and I reply, good morning, sir, that expression of mine is not the whole of truth, by any means. It was a reply, and was narrowly limited by that fact. So a Creed, the Nicene for example, a most noble and much-used symbol ; but mark the thunder-stroke movement of its Trinitarian clauses :—"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father." I do not know that any human composition does me more good to articulate ; but no breath of man ever shaped itself into just such a shape as that, except as divinely

stirred up by some denial, as the Nicene fathers in fact were. After this burst of polemical energy, the Creed swings into the broad Catholic movement of the Apostles' Creed, in the main, the only Creed I recall at this moment which does not lie open to my remark as to their polemical origin, and their resultant partialism. That has the true earmarks of Catholicity, and is therefore good to use under all circumstances and in all ages.

I have lying open before me, as I write, the Creed of the Theological Institute of Connecticut; which I mention with entire respect and simply for illustration's sake. It is a Creed which I could myself sign, as all members of the Connecticut Pastoral Union have, though I never did sign it. But if I did, I should do it in distinct remembrance that the document was originally a protest against certain phases of doctrine which it was supposed might get headway in the Congregational body in this State; and that, starting in such a motherhood, it must be a decent child and show its mothering, as it honestly does; so that it has nothing near the breadth of the two Creeds to which I have already referred. Of course every subscriber to that Creed, when he gets his name written, in the secret places of his own mind adds numbers of things; antithetic truths, qualifiers and wholesome expositions of the document, thus making another Creed, as long as the one he has signed, until he gets himself into the wholeness of Christian doctrine after all, into the sea, instead of being detained in a puddle. And that is my point; that Creeds must be signed in that way—not with mental reservations, I do not mean that, but with mental additions, ordinarily, that all Christian people could assent to. I will illustrate. The article in this Creed, that describes God's election, runs on in this familiar and innocent manner:—"God, from eternity, elected some of our fallen race to everlasting life, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, not for any foreseen faith or obedience in the subjects of election, but according to his own good pleasure." According to his own good pleasure! Now when I say amen to that, I interpolate a cogitation of my own, to the effect that God is a supremely good, reasonable Being, full of love, and finds his pleasure in going by the constraint of sweet and loving reasons always. And that is exactly why his "pleasure" in election—as the Creed calls it—is a good pleasure. Behold! what a flood of the milk of Heaven's kindness is carried into the interiors and very entrails of an Article on Election, by a little legitimate and friendly



amplification of the saying, "His pleasure." The object of the makers of the Creed was to get men suitably humbled under the sovereignty of God in Election ; but I have made an exegesis that also melts men ; for a "pleasure " so infinitely "good " is enough to melt anything.

Appending to the Creed a little meditation of my sort, a meditation which I should expect the authors of the Creed would themselves approve, I manage to globe my conception of God in salvation, and save the formula of the Pastoral Union from doing me any hurt. If it had gone on and declared that many are elected to be lost, as numerous Creeds have declared, I should be willing to sign that, because it is so ;—in an awful rational sense, it is so—but I should have my private appendix to that ; namely, all lost men elect themselves to be lost. One is as true as the other, and no theodicy is entire without both ; so that self-election should stand in the forefront of every Creed, as conspicuous, as loud-spoken, and fondly-spoken, as God's election.

You see my thought about Creeds now, and how I seem to myself to have a good deal of liberty in them—honorable liberty, I claim. If my Church has one that she would like subscribed by me, I am ready. If the Congregational National Council pleases to promulge some restatement of doctrine, by and by, I agree beforehand to give my name to it. They could invent something that I would not sign, but they will not. No Council, Synod, or General Convention, in these days, that is, of the Evangelical type, would issue a Creed which a man might not sign, in the main at least ;—sign and accept in the real meaning of its words and even in the intended meaning generally. By the way, what is the difference between real meaning and intended meaning ? Is there any ? If you subscribe to a Form, are you not honestly bound to subscribe according to the intention of the authors of it ? Is not that its real meaning ? I volunteer a small cogitation on that—since it seems to lie in my path through this subject—thus :—

The authors of a doctrinal statement may have launched out in that statement into something considerably bigger and grander than they meant, or supposed at the time they had got. Blessed be God, men are liable to these unconscious expansions, when their souls are in great travail with a Creed. You see something analogous to that in the experiences of the Biblical prophets sometimes. They forged expressions intentionally local and narrow, but behold

those expressions are susceptible of universal uses, and the Spirit of God that presided over those prophesyings designed just that largeness. Or, take a modern illustration. Some strict, and pretty denominational Calvinistic theologian goes upon his knees for prayer. He is a godly man and God moves in him as he prays. Perish the thought that he there, face to face with God, would say one word adverse to his own theology which he has solemnly elaborated and spent a lifetime on—but he almost does. Yes, he prays in such a way that an Arminian could join him. He is asking God to save a certain man, and in his earnestness, while the doctrine of decrees is not denied, and need not be, it is retired for the time being and other doctrines, just as true, are brought to the front; and the effect is as though his theology were getting modified, dropping its denominational marks, and taking on Catholicity.

Anybody may be overtaken by these enlargements. Secular men are. They coin sentences that reverberate forever. They make speeches that go in among the classics of the race. They intend nothing. They had not a thought of ambition. They had not the least premeditation, very likely. But all the more because thus unconscious and void of purpose, they were open to the spirit of the age, or the spirit of history, or the spirit of a great national movement, or the spirit of God—call it by whatever name you please, I fancy that on inspection it will be found to settle down to that last, the spirit of God in a man. Witness Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg. Witness many a hymn, and many a national hymn. Witness some music, in which the soul of mankind will speak itself forth forever.

Also witness some Creeds, I say. The writers intended Fatalism of the most insufferable species, let us suppose; but they shot clear over into Christianity, and Christianity ever after could use their Creed as a vehicle of her large meanings. After they had finished their production, they looked it over and pronounced it good—there was their Fatalism all out in elaborate black and white, all they could ask, so they think, but are deceived generally. In Creed-making, when the authors have made sure of the specialty most on their hearts, they start out into a pleasant excursion in some other parts of Christianity; paying their respects to this and that doctrine not necessary to be very powerfully stated just then they fancy—moving therefore unpolemically—and it is in those excursions, if nowhere else, that they are likely to trip and fall out of

their specialty in a measure ; and all succeeding generations have the advantage of their misfortune, and sign their Creeds. The great God who notes the sparrow's fall is unlikely to take no interest in a body of men in travail with a Christian Creed ; and while for wise purposes, He sometimes stands aloof and leaves them to bring forth a phenomenally mean result, at other times He passes into their spirits by His Spirit, and gives them a victory they never prayed for ; a Creed for the ages, a Creed to be chanted through all the tribes of Israel ; and when we chant it, we do not chant their intentions alone, but their magnificent inadvertency, their unknowing seership, their service in the will of God made articulate through them. What would not the Fathers say, if they could get up from their graves and see how their partial works have swept the world sometimes, the local and denominational widening into the universal, the individual made great and representative of the whole Church on Earth.

I think, then, that Creeds sometimes have a double sense ; man's sense (the sense of their author) and God's sense ; and you may sign which you please. If an ancient symbol proves large enough to hold all discoveries made since it was issued, very well, put the discoveries in mentally, and sign the whole thing. I repeat, a free use of Creeds is one of the ways by which we secure our liberty as thinking men.

I come now to the last head in this discourse, and inform you that any anxious doctrinal questioning you may now have, will be likely to be eased by the simple lapse of time, provided you go forward in your plain duty, preaching what you know, bringing the Gospel to bear on men as well as you can, and looking constantly to God.

How often does the following come to pass in the interior history of ministers? During their years in the school of theology, and for some time thereafter, they lay themselves out full-strength on certain questions that seem to them to lie at the very threshold of theology ; requiring therefore to be settled before the business of preaching can be taken up in earnest. I hung for a long time to the inquiry touching the existence of a God, such as I had traditionally received. I proposed to have that problem thought out, before I took one step in active life ; and then I proposed to make daylight shine through the incoming of moral evil into the universe of God. It could not be much satisfaction to discover a God to

be preached, unless I could discover that he is a good one, and worthy to be preached—and looking out on a creation in such terrible confusion, and distress as this one of ours, how could I find my way to the solid conviction, God is infinitely good? And so on. Questions and questions—and prime questions many of them, to a man about to spend his life in telling men about God and his ways. But, for various reasons, a man may find (as I did) that some of his questions cannot be solved by him at present; whereat he falls back tired out and lets them go. He has done his best, and they must go. In the case of some of them he accepts that slender preponderance of probabilities which he is able to raise in regard to them, and goes on with his work. In the case of others, he makes a complete adjournment to some far-away and more luminous future; and proceeds to preach just so much as he has discovered. His new work, with its splendid motives, and its successes very likely, wakes enthusiasm in him, and his old energy for unwieldy questions therefore slackens. In a hand-to-hand fight with evil he forgets to discuss how evil broke in on us originally. In his joyful proclamation of the Christian salvation, he forgets some of the intricate questions as to Biblical inspiration. There in the Book, beyond mistake, is the salvation, and that is enough to fill a man and keep him speaking with all his might. But by and by out of the pigeon-holes of his mind tumble by accident this and that old question of his; and to his amazement, when he tests himself on them he finds that they are settled, and he could not torment himself with them now if he tried. Some of them are settled as being solved. When his present mind looks them in the face, they seem to have no special perplexity. He has not studied them since those old days of mental tribulation; nevertheless they are clear—pretty clear. He has had personal experience of God, and that former debate—is there a personal and good God—is to him as though a man should fumble an axiom, and pretend to feel dreadfully because he could not understand it. Experience goes where logic cannot. Perhaps I cannot demonstrate that my will is free, but I feel it free in me; so no matter about your demonstrations. And particularly in the things of religion, demonstrations become superfluous as experience enlarges. Experience makes you intuitive. Experience makes you a large and knowing theologian. Experience enables you to sit back, high and lifted up and omniscient, in a sort of Olympian superiority, and

look down on the thinkers in the plain below, who in much dust and confused endeavor are wrestling with each other on the problem of a personal Deity, and the reality of an external world, and the facts of consciousness, and the probability of any kind of life beyond these present horizons, and the possibility of being saved from what we at present are, by the power of Jesus Christ. There they are, and up there he is—raised thereto by the actual doings of God in his soul.

But experience does not solve all things, and so our minister finds that some of those old trying subjects of his are settled, not as being explained, but as seeming now not especially necessary of explanation. If I have no interest in getting a thing explained, it is as if explained, for all practical purposes. These indifferent subjects I dare not mention in full, lest I appear to belittle some that others think of solemn consequence. The philosophy of the Atonement is an interesting matter, but one can live and save his soul if he postpone it to some convenient eternity. Large areas of philosophical divinity need not be traveled now, and need not be preached. And as to what we do preach, there is this to say, that preaching a doctrine with a view to save souls by it, and not with a view to get a subject systematically unfolded, is just the Baconian way of discovering exactly what that doctrine is and whether it is a doctrine. A doctrine that cannot be used, is a false one. A true doctrine which, in use, seems not to serve God's ends, and bless men, is misconceived at some point by the preacher. If all ministers were retired scholars, intent on theology and nothing more, I do not know in what misconceptions theology would not at last bring up. The salvation of theology is trying to preach it. Will it work? Put it to men. Does it convince them? Does it bring them to God? When I read some of the essays and books issued by professors of theology, I say—blessed be studiousness and the cloister. When I go among the churches and see the preachers, I say—blessed be service in the field. Well, every man ought to have something of both. Persons made as I was could never get to a large and comfortable settlement in the truth, I fear, by the labors of seminary life. Inquiry is in danger of being fruitless, unless brought continually to the test of life and manful striving.

Young Gentlemen, all through this hour I have carried an implication that some of you may be as I once was, and I have done what I could to show you the ways of liberty out in the world ;



and possibly in my earnestness for so long, on that one point, I have seemed to provide more liberty than any one needs, or should take. I have no idea that many of you will find yourselves pushing and discomforted to get your liberty when you fairly come to the sacred and sweet ministries of your office. You will have passed through your curriculum, and in it will have become affirmative, and Creed-bound to a certain extent, and in an intelligent and wholesome way. You will have had some spiritual experiences which have confirmed your faith and enlarged your religious intelligence as much as the teaching of your teachers. And, back of all, as being earlier than all, stand (I hope) the faiths of your childhood, your home nurture, the old nest-warmth, the magnetism of your mother, to mortgage you to God forever and make all serious Creed-wandering impossible. How we tug on those first moorings (the home-moorings) sometimes, but how they hold ; and after we have sufficiently roamed the realms of inquiry and had our strain and peril there, how peacefully we return to our first rest, and worship the God of our fathers. These conservative influences will work to make you not afraid of Creeds ; and that, joined with the fact that the theory of Creed subscription in these days is quite elastic in almost all Christian bodies, will give you a good sense of freedom. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

## THE VAGUE ELEMENTS IN LANGUAGE.

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Gentlemen, you are to be preachers some day not far off. Some of you have begun already in a scattering and tentative way, and it is impossible you should too thoroughly understand the instrument, Language, whereby you are to get your impression on men. So that I fancy I may do you a service if, to-day, I discourse before you on the Vague Elements in Language, and the value thereof.

I suppose you are already advised that it is your privilege to be clear, and convey ideas, definite ideas, when you speak, but I say unto you, it is your privilege also to be dim and misty, and convey no sharp-cut ideas at all, but only impressions; which impressions in your hearers will be deep or not just according as you are dim and not clear; the current doctrine, the doctrine I mean of the average man, that the sole function of language is to carry ideas into people's minds, being a dreadful untruth, an untruth which has miserably circumscribed many a preacher and many a theologian, and has caused many an extremely lucid creed to be worshiped three times more than it deserved.

I have nothing to say against clearness, as you will notice while I go on. Contrariwise, I should have been willing to speak to you to-day on:—The lucid elements in language and the value thereof;—as willing as to undertake the cause of mistiness, were it not that the true, great function of Mist is not appreciated by the most and does not get its real place in courses of lectures here and elsewhere.

This is a great and special era for insisting on perspicacity, and the disciples and enthusiasts of the perspicacious, in the scientific field, many of them at least, have got on now to the following pitch

of impudence ; namely, they are claiming that whatsoever is not absolutely visible, hearable, touchable, tastable, smellable, or what is the same thing, material, physical, and therefore demonstrable, is, on that account, not at all to be relied upon ; and so in one grand affirmation, the entire kingdom of supersensible entities, including God himself, that crown and sum-total of imperceptible realities, is obliterated by these gentlemen. Now as against the modern agnostic position, and against the more outright doctrine of absolute denial, I on this occasion lift up my doctrine of Mist, the legitimacy of vagueness, the sterling use of vagueness, the indispensability of vagueness indeed, in order to the highest impression on the human mind. It is nothing against a thing that it cannot be explicitly formulated. It may be as real a reality notwithstanding that. And that it resists formulation is, as likely as not, one of the tokens of its immensity.

But let us now carefully edge along into our subject and see what we find. A picture, gentlemen, is a statement, in a terminology addressed to the eye and not to the ear. And whereinsoever it has force and arrests the beholder, it gets its hold first of all, of course, by its distinctness. That stands central. A painted tree must be a tree to the eye, beyond a peradventure ; a man a man, a leaf a leaf, an animal an animal, and nothing else. If the artist starts to say tree, and leaves you debating whether it be not a human shadow that you are observing on the canvas there, that artist thereby advertises his own confusedness, and is in a vagueness that no lecturer can defend. For I should have said, there are two kinds of mist ; the mist of a weak and essentially misty mind ; and the mist of minds large, rational, lucid, who are as capable of clear statement as of fogging, and who never let in a shred of fog save as attendant upon, and an envelope of, a sunlit statement.

So then the picture of which I am speaking ; the good picture, the powerful picture, has something to say, and says it in a tone that is crystalline and ringing. That to begin with, doubtless. So much as that I concede to the cause of perspicacity. But now behold how the real and effective artist gets himself on beyond the finiteness of perspicacity, into the larger ranges of impression. For there is no use in talking to the contrary, whatever can be stated is too small to carry us completely away. However limited we may be ourselves, thank God, we have a life-long, constitutional hunger for the unstatable. Give us some token of that, O artist. Hang

out a flag over where the unstatable lies hidden. Draw for our eye a hand that points out into the vast which you cannot explore. Show us a wind blowing that way. Anything, anything, to tell us that beyond all that can possibly be formulated in the terms of your Art, there sweeps an Unknown ; and that you are not yourself in the conceit that the statable is anything more than a dot to the outspread unstatable. Some signal to notify us of that we must have, if we are to bow ourselves clear to the ground before you.

A few days ago, with this thought foaming in my mind, I stepped into my parlor to see how my paintings there hung, showed in this great matter. The first one I chanced upon was a copy of Rosa Bonheur's "Changing Pastures ;"—a work full of space, light, clearness, and beauty ;—no metaphysical theologian ever made an argument more translucent and incontestable than that woman's showing of her wide stretch of waters, her crowded boat-load of sheep in the foreground, her sweep of mountains in the distance, her human figures, the old shepherd and his oarsmen in the boat, and all the rest. Her realism and the bare, large vigor which she manifests in that out-standing and massive reality, are most admirable ;—and manly. I mean disrespect to nobody when I call such work as that manly. But Rosa Bonheur does not stop there. No. Here and there is a rent in her realism, through which we walk out of the real, and out of the narrowness of visibility, into the ideal with its immeasurable scope, its absolute openness and feeling of openness ;—the region wherein the soul of man is most at home and most elate, always. For example ; the painter might have bounded her picture by a wall solid and high as heaven, and she might have arched over the entire scene by a great dome of stone, and shut us down under that to contemplate forever her well-painted, literal sheep—so literal that you can hear them bleat all packed together there ; to these literalities of several sorts, I say, she might have confined us, with not a ghost of an outing anywhere ; but—dear Soul ! she wouldn't do it, in truth she could not ; she could not herself endure to be imprisoned in that way. So, in place of a dead surface of wall, or any hindering thing, she set a brave, great sky ; a veritable God's sky ; not a leaden, eye-confining thing, almost as bad as a wall, but a sky full of Beyonds and outlying infinitudes, a sky that beckons the impressible beholder into these roomy outings ; so that while her picture is an earth-scene and tells an earthly story, and not the highest kind of one either,

but a lowly, rather, enlivened and glorified by no definite touch of sentiment or pathos ; nevertheless it widens away into the heavenly spaces, as all of earth ought to.

So much for the sky. Then under the sky and on the earth such touches as these occur—all of them outings for the contemplative beholder, you notice. Of course, if the beholder wants to stop at sheep, and in sheep have his whole satisfaction, I do not know that he can find a lot more to his mind than these of Rosa Bonheur's. If he knows a sheep when he sees it, and if sheep know him as a friend of sheep, as all dogs knew John Brown, and all breathing creatures loved Donatello, then he may sit down in this boat on the waters, this sheep-boat, and stay and have his perfect bliss. He will escape all perils of the imagination, and be on first-rate terms with those scientists who cleave unto the finite and pooh-pooh all else.

But most picture-lovers like to spread a little and wander, and get far-off, and be let forth into the unhorizoned ranges. They fancy that life's literalities do themselves get a lift somehow and a transfiguration, if only in looking at them and dealing with them we have in us at least an obscure sense of something other than they ; other, vaster, and more dim. Therefore this painter of ours comforts us by opening valleys back into her mountains ; great valleys ; valleys not painted but suggested by the top-lines of the mountains ; and as they are only suggested and not closely defined, you are at liberty and are invited to send forth your musing mind into them and expatiate to your heart's content ; a performance this, on the part of the painter, much more stimulating and satisfactory to you than though she had gone up the valley with you and told you all and everything, as she did in the case of her sheep.

Moreover, by way of otherwise indicating her valleys, and not actually plodding along up them and showing you every step of the road, she starts her waters flowing back, and up, and when she gets those waters well started she stops them, but she stops them in such a way that when you notice exactly where they stop, it is plain as day that they do not stop there, but range on, you cannot tell how far ; just as a winding road when it goes out of sight gives you the clearest kind of a notification that it is still moving on. Now what a cunning and masterful way of painting a valley it is, not to paint it, but hint it, somehow. How much more sizable and bewitching is a hinted valley than a painted one !



It is like a veiled lady ; her indistinct face gives you a chance to glorify her ; but if she lifts her veil, the facts are all out. The unveiled facts may be ravishing, but they cannot be so ravishing as your idealistic creation of that face when so far concealed that there is a chance to work your imagination upon it.

But pass from Rosa Bonheur's mountains and valleys and suggestive sky, to her treatment of the waters over which she floats her sheep. It was in her fond heart to make those waters lustrous under the slant lights of her sky ; but lustres are likely to detain the eye on the surface and hold it away from the much more serious and impressive thought and feeling of awful depths and glooms underneath. It were too bad to give us a stretch of sea with no fathomless mystery below, merely that certain soft hues might waver before us and shine and please. Therefore along the waves now and then she makes a submarine hint, and in the far foreground where the shadows of three human forms are cast upon the water from the boat, she, the painter, instead of reflecting them to us from the surface merely, as she might have done, carries them down and down ; as much as to say :—"See now, this water is no shallow thing, but a shadowy abyss, it runs down, dimness below dimness, it widens away in tracts and tracts of gloom, it sequesters hordes of creatures, it treasures old wrecks, and the dead and the lost things of long ago, heaps on heaps ;"—"yes, it is a sea," she says ; "I cannot paint it for you, what terms are large enough for stating such a thing as that, but just you follow those three shadows into the depths and see what sort of a feeling they raise in you ;—it is not necessary you should have any clear ideas as you follow those shadows, it is better you should not ; what you want is a great impression of submarine realities, and that is best secured by escaping the realism of detail and all distinctness, and all sense of boundaries."

I have spent an unconscionable time on this picture, you may think, but you are mistaken. In this one and particular study thus long-protracted I am getting some principles established which open a path for us into the innermost of my subject. I had thought to mention the vague elements in other pictures on my walls ; but I must not delay. There hangs there a copy of Church's "Sunrise in the Tropics," which begins with an exhibition of tropical foliage as veracious and full of fact as the multiplication table. But then, immediately back of that in the picture, everything goes

into haze, a lovely illumined haze, deeper and deeper as you follow on into the remote. The forms of things struggle through it with great difficulty, and by and by they disappear altogether and your eye buries itself at last in complete confusion, a golden confusion ; but that confusion is by no means like a stone wall to end at. You cannot see through, I grant you, any more than you could through a stone wall—that is true—but unlike the wall, it does not stay your mind ; nay, it projects your mind into regions outlying, and you feel very much as though you were actually seeing breadths, and breadths and breadths of equatorial luxuriance and splendor.

These illustrations of the indeterminate, and the function of it, taken from the painter's art, are fascinating and endless, but I want to take you now over into the field of music ; peradventure, that will help me on my way a little and still more confirm my doctrine of the vague.

I do not refer now to music wedded to words, and made to carry a theme contained in those words. I am playing off and away from words and language as yet, with a view to come down on that when I am ready for it, with a good momentum gathered up in these perambulations through the other arts or modes of expression, wherein I am now indulging. For, language, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, pantomime, all conceivable instruments of expression, have certain common features and in so far as they have, a study of one is a virtual study of the others.

The majority of those who have a heart for music and receive imperative and dear impressions from it, are not themselves musicians. They understand neither the terms nor the grammar of the art. The whole thing is a foreign language to them, and therefore they cannot speak it ; and if those who do speak it have any distinct ideas whatever in that speaking of theirs, this horde of ignorant but fond listeners know not what those ideas are. I appeal to the experience of many here present, if that is not so. I am one of the ignoramuses in question. And yet, there is no sort or form of utterance, or noise-making, which works on me even approximately as music does. I listen to it always when I can. I follow it about. I surrender my emotions to it. I was never yet in a state of rage which could not be utterly put down and made ashamed by music ; never in a grief which could not be profoundly ameliorated, for the moment at all events ; never in a levity that could not be chastened, nor in a perplexity or general state of dis-

trust that could not be led on and out into serenity ; and never yet was I in any seven-by-nine confinement in the finite, and there chafed, but music could infallibly toll me off towards and into the amplitude of the Infinite, where I could really get my breath and could mysteriously take on an imputation of its magnitude, and have some sense of possessing magnitude myself. But not one idea gets into me through that whole performance. Not one. If I listen to a preacher, I must attend to his meanings. Meanings are his one and only contrivance for getting at me and doing anything with me. Up there in a great sweat he stands conveying ideas, and down there in the pew I sit in a responsive sweat, trying to get ideas, so as not to lose the whole occasion. A twofold wretched tug, just because we are shut up to having ideas. I was told of a boy who, after a great deal of labor to make a composition, began one with this truly affecting remark :—"It is rather difficult and pretty impossible, to convey unto others those ideas of which you are not yourself possessed of." Now if that boy had been a musician, there would not have been a bit of need that he should convey ideas to anybody. His composition would have been as good without them. Whether musicians must themselves have ideas when they speak forth in that almost celestial language of theirs, is a nicer question. Exactly what idea, now, lies back of each term of that cabalistic eloquence, do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do? Please tell me that. And when those eight emptinesses get themselves together in all sorts of twist, double-twist, intertwist, and labyrinthine elaboration, and thereby make people cry, and sometimes laugh, and sometimes rend heaven with their indignation, what real thought or thing is there to which that miraculous complexity corresponds. When I throw out among you a sentence of this lecture of mine I am able to point you to some concrete thing which my words—most of them, not all—stand for. If I say, "Gentlemen," you know what that means. It is not like do or re or mi, mere articulate noise. If I say, "Gentlemen, you know nothing about music," the words :—*Gentlemen, you, know, nothing, and music*, all instantly suggest some reality that you can put your finger on, or your thought at all events. The term *nothing* in that sentence comes nearest to a failure in that respect. It would take a long hunt to find the tangible counterpart of nothing, I fancy ; and I may say, as I pass, that that is one of the numerous words at which those vaguenesses get in wherewith, I contend, language is

saturated. But I am speaking of music, and I am charging vagueness on it—for is not a language vague which accomplishes its victories of influence without carrying ideas, and without being able to point to any perceivable thing in heaven or earth, that its do-re-mi's, or its overwhelming combinations of do-re-mi's, signify. The necessities of my subject to-day do not compel me to prove that musicians when they compose or musically perform, whether by their own tuneful throats or by instruments, are totally empty of ideas. All I am forced to say is, that all much-impressed but unmusical listeners to their goings-on are not so impressed by ideas conveyed. As a work of supererogation, however, I do hint, that musical composers and musical performers when they address us, are not in just that distinct labor to embody ideas, ideas clearly formulated in their own consciousness and anxious to be delivered, that writers and speakers are in who use ordinary language. Of course I do not say this as intending to disparage music in comparison with the other arts of expression. On the contrary I put it foremost;—beyond Painting, beyond Literature, beyond Oratory, beyond everything. I like what Matthew Arnold says in one of his poems:—

Miserere Domine !  
 The words are uttered and they flee.  
 Deep is their penitential moan,  
 Mighty their pathos, but 'tis gone.  
 They have declared the spirit's sore,  
 Sore load, and words can do no more.  
 Beethoven takes them then—those two  
 Poor, bounded, words; and makes them new;  
 Infinite makes them, makes them young,  
 ——Transplants them to another tongue,  
 Where they can now, without constraint  
 Pour all the soul of their complaint,  
 And roll adown a channel large  
 The wealth divine they have in charge.  
 Page after page of music turn,  
 And still they live, and still they burn,  
 Eternal, passion-fraught, and free  
 Miserere, Domine !

Thus much in glorification of music. It is wonderful, unique, Heaven's solitary child and darling. But in the midst of all this that I say about it, I ask you not to forget what I am chiefly after, namely, this;—that Music holds this lovely and radiant queenship of hers, by reason in part of the fact, that she courageously dispenses

with the service of ideas and cleanly-minted conceptions ; as often as any way not using words at all, as in instrumentation for instance ; and where she does use them, as in her *do, re, mi*, taking care to select arbitrary and utterly meaningless terms, that cannot be tracked back to any physical root like most terms ; terms that cannot be traced to any particular association that explains their origin, (as where a certain special new color recently came to be called magenta, because a certain great battle had just happened to be fought at an old-world place whose name was Magenta) : selecting terms, I say, that owe their origin to the stark, inexplicable, lawless volition of man, terms therefore as bare of associations or foregoing history, as a new-born babe ;—that is the vocabulary of Music, in so far as she has any. Nevertheless, let me say it once more, she, most nearly of all voices, voices the infinite, she most successfully raises in us those feelings whose chiefest peculiarity is that they feel in us exactly as though they had no limits, and would be blasphemed if ever limits should undertake to circumscribe them. I tell you, Men and Brethren, we are all pretty small, but the smallest of us every now and then has emotions which, as we turn and look in on them, seems to be measureless—exactly that ; I have felt that a thousand times—measureless—or if on the remote outskirts of these emotions in us we observe some dim similitude of metes and bounds, they are so dim that they do not distress and suffocate us ;—they are like Rosa Bonheur's sky, which is the end of her picture to be sure, the point at which her brush stopped ; but the point also and moreover and a good deal moreover, at which we are passed triumphantly on and out into whatever illimitable voyaging we have the sensibility and imagination for.

I was getting off the substance of this statement not long ago, to a very practical and concrete woman, a woman of every-day, remorseless sense ; and she told me she wished I would stop talking in that way to her. She listened attentively, and was vexed, because she discovered nothing in her own experience that corresponded to those big moods and mental states that I pretended to be describing. Gentlemen, if any of you are vexed, I cannot help it. Perhaps some day, when you are old enough and impressible enough and reflective enough on your own inward state, this thing will begin to glimmer into you. Blessed be God for music, or for whatever thing has the knack to abolish horizons and let us out into the Infinite ; which, after all, is our native air.



Speaking of sounds, and of their power according as they are indefinite, consider a great, booming bell-stroke, or the go-off of a great cannon. When they first hit the ear, those sounds, they are even painfully definite and mind-piercing; as excruciating as a creed that assumes to get God defined completely and made portable in the finite; but after a little that clear first crash has the decency to fine away and fine away and widen off into space, and grow vast, and by and by misty and wavering, till at last it hovers and pulses on the very verge of silence; there it stands trembling as though loath to jump off and be eternally still;—finally it jumps and is gone forever, and then it comes back and is not gone—then it dies again—then returns a very tenuous and phantasmal ghost of a sound. It reminds one of Tom Hood's lines:—

We watched her breathing thro' the night,  
Her breathing soft and low,  
As in her breast the wave of life  
Kept heaving to and fro.

Our very hopes belied our fears,  
Our fears our hopes belied—  
We thought her dying when she slept,  
And sleeping when she died.

So that vanishing sound thinned out through the whole immeasurable air, and when it expired no mortal could tell;—but I ask you; when is that bell-stroke, or that explosive cannon, most powerful; when in the first crash it is separated from the encompassing silence of the creation by a line of distinction like an abyss, or when its confines have come to be dubious, when it has reached the border-lands of Silence and is melting into silence, like snow into the river? Its vagueness is its glory. Its vagueness makes it seem large. Its vagueness holds us in a hush of emotion. Its vagueness energizes upon us and in us and produces emotions that are the duplicate of its own dreamy magnitude. And it is just so with many other inarticulate sounds.

But let me now carry my doctrine of the vague over into Literature, and observe how the case stands there. Take that poem of two verses, written by Alfred Tennyson, and called by him, "The Poet's Song." I think you will say, Gentlemen, that it requires good courage in me and all sorts of faith in my dearly-beloved vagueness, to go to that man for specimens of it. For who

that ever wrote is more crystalline than he, who more nearly approaches the beautiful finiteness of Greek sculpture, who has cut more cameos, and who more delights in cameos, with their explicit particularity and their ever-legible lines of limitation? Yes, that is so ; but Tennyson is a great man ;—he is no cameo himself and he cannot confine himself to cameo work. As a matter of pastime he may toss off a jewel like that, and there stop ; but when he brings all his powers into the field , after he has done his fine cutting and given you a scene, a thing, a man, a thought, so that it stands out like a dog's head on a door-knocker for distinctness ; he proceeds to call you off into regions circumjacent and large and misty, as likely as not, like the sea-begirt and fog-bestrown island on which he lives ;—tones far-away you will hear—tones indeterminate—bells that are of earth perhaps and perhaps of heaven, wind-sounds “from unsunned spaces blown,” yes, revelries of the imagination, ordered and melodious revelries, he will give you, and in your joy you will forget cameos and crystals and all clear-cut forms whatsoever.

I do not think that the poem—“The Poet's Song”—is so good an illustration of all this as I might find, but it does furnish a good etching, an absolute picture ; and at the same time there is a noble off-look or two in it, which gives a sense of room and range ;—exactly as Rosa Bonheur, after she had painted her sheep with Tennysonian fidelity—there they are, sheep all over, precisely as God made them—indulges us in brave sky-lines and great suggestive chasms and valleys in her mountains, and great watery depths, and so on ;—so that we are in the expansibility of the Creation a little, and not in the belittlement of a cameo.

Tennyson undertakes to tell us in the two verses mentioned, that a poet went forth from the city into the country, seated himself, and poured forth a poetic melody. And the melody was so fascinating and amazing, that a wild swan, a lark, a swallow, a snake, a hawk and a nightingale, all paused and listened, and declared they never conceived the like. As I read now, just watch these creatures. You can see them as visibly as though I had them here with me to pantomime the thing over again for your edification.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
He passed by the town and out of the street,  
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,  
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,  
And he sat him down in a lonely place,

And chanted a melody loud and sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the bee,  
The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak  
And stared, with his foot on the prey,

(It must have been marvelous singing that arrested him in his greediness there.)

And the nightingale thought, "I have sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

Now I do not know but that utterance is perfect, artistically and everywise. But that in it which engages my attention at the present, is first the author's absolute conception of his scene; no cameo I say was ever better cut; there is a statement for you as firm-lined and obvious as though made under oath, by the most incorrigible of realists;—all the rights of perspicuity are religiously secured,—no holy creed were ever better in that regard; but see now secondly, how Tennyson slips in a magnitude or two, and gives us an offing here and there, an outrun into the majesty of the dim, a touch of atmosphere which like all atmospheres ever seen of man, comes just short of complete translucency; and we all know that the one feature by which atmospheres get those lovely shows and carnivals of color wherewith they so intoxicate us, is this short-coming of theirs in the matter of clearness.

When our poet has taken us into the country and spoken of the wind blowing from the gates of the sun, and of the cloud-shadows traveling across the wheat, he has therein and thereby given us a feeling of height and space out there. We are not invited to any small scene, like an etching hung in a gallery, but the whole creation is called in to make an occasion worth while. And that is a good start. Plainly it is no mere cameoist that has us in charge. Next he proceeds to inform us that this same whole creation is made to be attent and is, in fact, just ravished by that out-poured melody from that man there seated. The prose way of stating that, would have been to state it straightforwardly, just as I now have. But to hint it, by picturing three or four animal creatures as arrested and attent, is three times as effective as any

statement. To our quick feeling, those intensely concrete and lively specimens of the creation are more than the creation, on the principle sometimes mentioned, a part is more than the whole ; as that veiled lady, you remember, was more revealed when partly veiled than when her entire unobscured face rose on us.

By that cunning device, then, of the selected animals, Tennyson takes us on an unexpected walk through the creation, a walk not precisely marked out either, but vague, vast and alluring. I do not say that we are wide-awake to all this, and consciously say to ourselves :—It is through the creation we are now going ;—no, the author does not wish us to be in such a state of clear intelligence as that. All he wants is to start a creation-feeling in us, while we concentrate on his four, interesting live creatures.

Two releases, then, we have had already from the finite and narrow ;—both times into the outlying creation. But now comes a third release, not exactly into the creation this time, but into the future ; and not into any finite and comprehensible future, the future, that is, of dates and days and periods, and generations, and slow great cycles ; the future that can be held in clear idea—no, not into any such terminable and little thing does he project us, but hear him :—

The nightingale thought, I have sung many songs,  
But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away.

When the years have died away ! Are we detained on larks, hawks, swans, snakes, and nightingales now ? We started with them ; for we must start on some solid and real thing always ; and men of mind always give us some clear thing like that to begin with ;—or as I said before, in every picture there needs to be, for a central fact to tie up to, a statement, a cubical nugget of reality ;—but this nugget having been secured in this poem and we having gone all abroad from that, in a flourish or two, as I have explained ; we are caught up at last and shot forth and forward, farther than cannon-balls ever went, farther than space ever stretched, beyond the roll of time, into a nebulous Somewhere, so nebulous as to be next thing to Nowhere, and in that half—somewhere half—nowhere, our minds roll about in just that big confusedness which the poet wants us to be in. He might have said or had his nightingale say :—ten thousand

years away, or a hundred thousand, or a million. Perhaps Jonathan Edwards, in his more acute and analytical moments, would have liked that better. There is a relishable, factual quality in that, that I can see myself. But I do not want to look at it long. I would rather be ballooned in the Infinite, to the sound of:—

When the years have died away!

There is also a touch of the supernatural in this poem, which I have not mentioned. How easy it is to construct a first-rate argument wherein it shall be proved that the supernatural and the infinite cannot be set forth in natural and finite terms at all. "Natural terms! Physical terms! Limited terms! They embody the unlimited! Why is not that a contradiction in so many words? By whatever laborious devices you carry this earth-bound, small terminology of yours over towards the supra-mundane and its immensities, and howevermuch you sublimate these terms of yours, as is often done in poetry, will they not distinctly savor all the same of their earth-born pedigree? Can they go beyond themselves? Must not all sky-piercing human structures stand on the earth and there keep standing however high they go, and rock when the earth rocks? What are God, angels, heaven, hell, and all the rest over yonder, as we conceive and describe them; and what can they be, but materialistic and anthropomorphic projections, long-stretching shadows of things here, that we have come to know about? An angel, conceived by a man, is a magnified man. And even God, in all our descriptions of him, is simply or mostly a powerfully idealized man, we might say. We call him a person and thus make him head up in a bounded consciousness, like us;—an awful and large consciousness, to be sure, but the moment he is alleged to have consciousness at all, he is represented as fenced in from the great All of being, a section of the All, nucleated and organized;—in fact, made little in order that he may be made conceivable to little folks like us. A friend of mine asked Matthew Arnold when he was among us recently, how he came to invent that much-bela-bored definition of God, which he has put into his books. He calls him you recollect, "that power other than ourselves that makes for righteousness." And he replied "that he did not invent it in the interest of agnosticism or unfaith, but in the interest of a larger faith." He had grown sick of the current belittlement of the Almighty in the customary religious talk about him as a person, and



so on. He thought that the pious masses are under the delusion that when they have said person, and a number of other strictly human and cameo words, they have actually got God. Therefore he proposed to throw them out to sea and get some size into them, bereaving them utterly of their old, circumscribed lingo, and calling them to take note of, and be awestruck under, this rather finely conceived and first-rate vagueness ; "That power other than ourselves that makes for righteousness." What a sudden lift out of the smallness of personalism, that expression *the not-ourselves* is ! Whether it is in every respect a safe and wholesome thing to be lifted into the eminently thin ether of Mr. Arnold's definition, I will not now say ; but as to the whole notion that supersensible things and persons cannot be set forth to any good purpose by a naturalistic and human language ; I say they can. What terms, pray, does Mr. Arnold himself employ when he sets out to take away the people's God, and give them another and larger one ? Was the sentence "The power not ourselves," made out in this *unknown* that we all want to get into and talk about ? I venture to guess that it was devised in the library of Matthew Arnold, and that every word of it is nothing but English—not divine, not even angelic, but earthly to the last degree. I presume you could trace those words into the earthly past a thousand years, and very likely find where they first came up out of the soil of earth and time.

But I was remarking on Mr. Tennyson's poem, "The Poet's Song"—and saying there is an element of the supernatural in it ; and in it you will see one of the ways by which the supernatural may be and often is set forth in the machinery of the natural. Those birds, snakes, and what-not, that were so captivated by that chanted melody—that human song so immensely transcending all songs of larks and nightingales—did not behave after the natural and well-known fashion of such creatures. Whether they have such intelligent and listening birds out in the invisible I do not know. Perhaps they do. Perhaps these that Mr. Tennyson saw were astrays from that land other than our own. At any rate, they are no birds of ours. And, don't you see, we are just enough confused as to whose they are—whose and whence—to feel ourselves carried out and away and far away from the strictly terrestrial. It is precisely another other-than-ourselves contrivance. We go astride of such magnificent negatives and mind-puzzlers, and ride the realms of air

—not into the invisible literally, perhaps, but into very imposing mist, wherein the effect on us is considerably as though we had become conversant now with trans-mundane territories.

If I might take time for it, I could show you this same thing, this arriving at the supersensible by earthly means, in a much more striking development in Coleridge's *Christabel*—where quite a number of weird and unclassifiable occurrences come in to lift our feet away from the ground and make us know that, wherever we are, we are not in this world merely. For instance, there is a mastiff that every night of his life, when the castle bell strikes twelve, puts forth just sixteen howls, twelve for the hours and four for the quarters. Where did such a dog as that come from, every rational human being proceeds to ask. And how is it that that barking of his is done always at the very hour, the awful hour, when his mistress of the castle died years and years ago? Now Coleridge has half a dozen or more inventions like this in that poem. And what is the result? He does not take you to any particular shore, land, coast, or remote station of the universe by these inventions, and definitely land you; but he takes you away from this time-land; yes, that is the trick of it; he carries you off and leaves you nowhere, and the nearest you can come to any description of your feelings, is to say—"Well, here I am, but where am I!" and that is a pretty good description of the unearthly, the beyond, the invisible, in finite terms.

But not merely in night-howling mastiffs and in birds bewitched by poets' melodies, may the "country other than our own," and the unperceivable people and personages off here "other than ourselves," "that make for righteousness" some of them, and some of them not, be expressed, but in single words also something of the same sort can be done. If I say of God, he is infinite, that is, not-finite, I think I have made on your mind a decided impression concerning him as he really is. I have taken an earth-born, finite word, and negatived it, and doing that, have pitched you out of the finite totally. To be sure I have given you no more spot to land on than had Noah's weary dove, but that is precisely what I aimed at. If Noah's dove had found a place for his anxious feet, he would not have thought it much of a flood that he was sailing over; and if my *in-finite*, should set you down on any determinate thing or spot, you would certainly underestimate the divine; just as when the Creeds say "persons," and 'three persons in one

nature," they (according to Mr. Arnold) almost minimize the Being they are describing. The truth is, as soon as we have said *persons*, we must pour in the glorious confusion of our negatives, like *non-finite*, and start the people out of their comfortable earth-built snuggeries, (like *persons* and so on) and set them careering—not to say careening—across the uncharted expanse of the Boundless. We want to leave them about where that old definition of infinite space leaves the mind; namely, "Infinite space is that whose center is everywhere and whose circumference nowhere." That is just about what it is. Gentlemen, I am not the man to deny the legitimacy of Creed terms; *person*, *three persons*, and all the rest. I do insist, though, that while you are regaling yourself with your small bottles of water, you shall not be permitted to think that in those neat and delightful half-pints you have the ocean. And in order to prevent your thinking it, I say, let the ocean in on you, and paddle confusedly about in it and get to know its greatness. Often one and the same word, or expression, may be made to have in it a clear, finite affirmative, and withal a flicker of the infinite; as where the Nicene Creed declares the eternal generation of the Son of God. Generation is a terrestrial term, and a term of beginning applied in the non-terrestrial field, where terrestrial flavors are impertinent; but when you add the word "eternal," and deny a beginning to the Son of God you have somewhat purged your terminology of its earthly taint and made it serviceable in that region of the immaterial.

You have often noticed the clear western sky illuminated by the sun descending, or quite gone down, and have felt that that sky led you off and back and through and on, as to the very throne of God. But I submit you do not get so far back in a clear sky as you do in a sunset sky that is heavily clouded, but is revealed, a touch here and a touch there, through rents in those cloud-forms. How deep and holy and sometimes awful in their splendor are those narrow in-looks. Gentlemen, our language of the supernatural, unseen and illimitable are cloud-terms; in which there are hints of those Beyonds; mere hints, rents, partings of the finite, in-looks therefore, on-looks, through-looks, all the more intense and overpowering because thus framed in;—as in picture-galleries you see better by looking through tubes.

I make a turn now in my general subject and come up to vagueness in language from another direction.

When I was discoursing on music a little back, I made the point that the effect of music is preeminently emotional, rather than intellectual; an impression on feeling, without any ideas carried over into the mind. I now have to say that while language is certainly a vehicle of ideas, and carries swarms of them into hosts of minds, clear ones, splendidly clear and satisfying sometimes; it also in innumerable instances consents to be like music exactly; and, while it talks on, and sounds intelligent enough, as a matter of fact secures in the listener emotionalism only, and no sense of ideas whatever. And that service of language is as great as any other, and ought not to be spoken against as though it were something unsolid and beneath human beings; especially educated human beings, like theologues in their third year, or learned professors in their many years. My mind is that great men who are void of just this mooniness do miss one of their chief bignesses, and had better begin right off to size out into the obscure, and take impressions that they cannot give much account of at the time,—impressions, I mean, that they do not at the moment trace to ideas received.

Now language often prevails by the musical quality in it considerably. My yacht on the waves rocks me in the loveliest curves of motion conceivable. And rhythm in language rocks me. And rhyme rocks me. And the kiss and kiss of Hebrew parallelism rocks me. And the structural balance in the movement of many a prose writer rocks me, I find. I am not intellectual under it—at least, it is not that feature of the effect which I am considering now—I am not intellectual, I am a babe and rocked. Robert Browning begins one of his poems thus :—

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles,  
Miles and miles,

and we are all delighted. But why? Because of the clear scene in it, of course, the lovely distance, the expansiveness of the whole thing and the beauty spread over all. But there is more than that in it. There is a flow of melody. Hear those ravishing liquids and vowel-sounds murmur along together,—the evening smiles, miles and miles. And while I am on this passage let me name to you another subtle power in it. By the monotony of that melody, our feeling, unbeknown to ourselves, is chastened and made serious, and thus brought into accord with the pensiveness of the

evening. We are put into an evening mood, so as to look at the quiet-colored horizon off there, and at

The solitary pastures where the sheep  
Half-asleep  
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight, stray or stop  
As they crop—

to look at the whole, I say, with adjusted and suitable eyes. Now Browning did not think out all this contrivance of expression for getting the upper hand of us. No, it was not stratagem in him, but spontaneity,—cultured spontaneity. He felt thus and so himself, and he simply poured this his feeling forth; and we are caught. It is not a matter of ideas on either side,—his or ours. You add up all the volumes that Shakespeare ever wrote, and it would not begin to equal the volumes that Shakesperian commentators have written to explain his cute ways of fascinating us; whereas most often he wasn't cute and intentional at all. Is a bird cute and intentional when he sings? Is a flower full of plans on us when it blooms? Is God premeditative and strategic when he loves?

Now Brethren, keep hold of my exact point. I am running down ideas, conscious, clear ideas as necessary factors and sole factors in self-expression, and in receiving impression from language. Dr. Elisha Kane relates that during one of his long winters in the vicinity of the north pole, a certain sailor on his ship was observed to be weeping over Tennyson's:—

Break, break, break  
At the foot of thy crags, oh Sea,  
But the tender grace of a day that is dead  
Will never come back to me.

I never asked the sailor, but I will engage that if he had spent his whole winter trying to find out wherefore he cried, he could not tell. He could tell some things; as that the "Never come back to me," started his heart homeward, and also set him wondering whether he should ever see home again, and get away from that miserable old inscrutability, the north pole. But it would not have occurred to him that Tennyson's music was stealing into him, and the gray tone of the music, the monotony, the sombre refrain; also the bright images in the background of the poem, on which these gravities were projected and made more grave:—also never could he have devised the connection of thought between these two lines:—



Break, break, break  
On thy cold gray stones, oh Sea.

(Just hear the lament in those vowels—"thy cold, gray, stones, oh Sea") and these other two lines of the same verse:—

And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me.

What is the connection, anyhow? Most people cannot tell. No matter what the connection is. Stop trying to get ideas. You can cry without them, just as well. The first real, old, luxuriant English ivy that I ever saw, an ivy that covered every inch of a church tower several feet deep, was at Muckross Abbey, in Ireland; and I cried. What did I do that for? Was not that being more mooney than was really necessary? Did I cry under a sudden uncommon access of ideas? I never was emptier of ideas in my life. Men and Brethren, do you not know that three quarters of the chords that vibrate in us are below our consciousness; that more than half of our experiences come from strokes made on those sub-conscious chords; that preaching, or old ivies never reach their utmost power till they reach them and play on them; that those chords are reached without ideas even better than with them; that a Creed partially fails, if, while it states thoughts as clear-cut as a minted dollar, it does not at the same time start the mysterious depths in us, the sleeping sub-bass strings, the strings of mystery, the strings that talk large and talk vague, like that bell-tone that I described as widening abroad through the infinite air, so spiritual and unmeasurable at last?

I can tell now about that ivy business, in part at any rate, because I have analyzed it. I have been down into myself with a search-warrant, and after I had read Browning's "Love Among The Ruins," I did the same thing; and I have no objection to self-search, in itself considered; but I resist the doctrine that emotions not thought-born are illegitimate; bastards and not sons; that therefore language must bend its whole strength to begin clear; when the most superfine and celestial instrument of expression that we know of, (music) has its main strength in not being clear; I resist the doctrine for many reasons. The first reason is, that I know better—know it by having thought it out, and know it by a hundred experiences of my own. The second reason is, that everybody else knows better, if he is old enough to examine his own contents and

will calmly do it with this matter in his mind. The third reason is, that religion cannot live without my doctrine of vagueness. It may have a name to live, in the form of cold-blooded, finite and small propositions; but religion in its fulness and full power is a thing saturated with awe; and how can awe keep itself alive while looking up simply into the small face of a definitely-stated immaterial, invisible, immeasurable and divine. My fourth reason is, that if preaching is content to be propositional, lucid, exact and religious in the canned form only; an eternal display of cameos; it can have no such efficacy among men as it ought to. When you come to that particular kind of work and declare it the only kind that has any right to be done, you have practically and in principle gone over to materialistic scepticism; which has settled down on the theory that only the thing which can be brought into measurable dimensions, and really grasped, is a thing at all, and entitled to our respect.

Now Brethren, in the progress of my thought to-day I hope I have not accidentally disrespected clarity in expression, and those extreme labors of clarification which are so congenial to many minds both eminent and common, in the pulpit and out of it. I listen to them sometimes when they are simplifying things and putting them up in minute packages,—“breaking the bread up small and putting it on a low shelf,” so that the most undeveloped of us can get the good of it—I listen to them, and watch them, and notice how manfully they contend with the universal haze of things, with a thorough-going gusto; and when with much tugging they push back the line of haze one space farther, and widen the horizon of the definite, I am as pleased as anybody; but I cannot help reminding them every now and then, that what I have often noticed in the brightest days of the year in London, may be noticed also in those areas of thought which they have most triumphantly clarified and flooded with daylight, to wit;—the very daylight never fails to have a sweet blue haze in it. Look up into the dome of St. Paul’s, and there it is, and no mistake. Out of doors I said, What a perfect and shining day this is, in this celebrated old fog-land! But all the while the haze was there; and likewise in subjects, when you have reached the acme of translucency, you need to wash your sunshine once more; and then and moreover, we all know, and these gentlemen themselves admit, that a few miles back in the subjects which they have so cleared, there begins a gloaming which deepens back into midnight.

It is interesting to remember that every word they use is stocked with several meanings and is likely to be a bit muddled on that account. First of all, it has more or less of its primary and physical meaning, the taste of the earth from which it sprung ; and some man who listens to them will detect that aboriginal flavor. Next, the word has lingering in it its historical meaning, the savors it has picked up in its passage down ages and ages of use ; and some listener will be ferretting out that. Next, if it so happens that the word is an inspired one, because the man who utters it is a temple of the Holy Ghost, it will have in it a God's meaning, which meaning perhaps the speaker himself has no thought of, and which most of his hearers also may not perceive, while some truly sensitive and clairvoyant perceiver in the assembly will get hold of it. Next, (and finally—for I cannot mention all the contents and cargoes in each word of man)—next, I say, that word thrown out among the people, is like the shadows in a lake caused by the trees, heights and buildings on its banks. Those trees, heights and buildings are fixed and stationary things, in the main, and are therefore able to cast stationary and restful shadows, if only they can have a restful surface on which to cast ; but the lake is mobile and unstable—it lies still and glassy when it wants to ; and then those shadows look like their originals on the bank ;—then again it ripples, it rolls ; then clouds float over and kill those bank-shadows altogether ; and so it shifts on.

"The shadows on Loch Katrine's breast  
Are neither restless nor at rest."

Thus words ; they go out upon a thousand different minds and take their luck. Say Imagination to one man and he scowls ; say it to another and he smiles all over. It is sometimes said that a man sees in Europe only what he takes to Europe. Well, a man sees in a word only what he takes to it. One day in my congregation, Dr. Horace Bushnell took his hat and left, in a spurt of honest wrath, because I asked the people to sing the tune America. They stayed and rolled out America with a great noise, but he would not hear it, because it was God Save the Queen, one of the national airs of England, stolen and rechristened America. So it is with all things. They have the bad luck to fall on different minds, making peace sometimes, and sometimes a pother. I amused myself this morning thinking about you students, and what variegated impressions the

sight of you in a body here in this chapel makes on this miscellaneous fringe of people, right, left, and all around. I know what I think of you, but Bob Ingersoll looks on you with mingled pity and contempt. And alongside of him sits a minister who has averaged you and concluded that you do not seem as intellectual as the students of his day. So that he is afraid the ministry is flattening out. Another minister knows better, he thinks. He says you look first-rate. One brother out there has himself had a hard and depressing time in the ministry, and your hopefulness, as you look forward to your work, makes him almost sick. One old minister, who has had just strength enough left to get to this Chapel and sample a few of my lectures, is mightily pleased because the gaps made by the fading away of the old men are so sure to be filled. Another man weeps because you remind him of his son who died while in his divinity studies. And then the ladies over here have their views. Some of them just mother you. Some have "thoughts too deep for tears"—on William Wordsworth's principle, perhaps—

To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

That is the manifold picture you make, Gentlemen. It is not your fault. You are solid and immutable enough, as an object. These brick buildings are hardly more so. But these minds that gauge you, they are regular Loch Katrines :—

In bright uncertainty they lie,  
Like future joys to Fancy's eye,

and you have to suffer. People find in you, and in words, just what they take to them and to you. And that is an element of incertitude in language.

Then too, the clear speakers, who make a god of clearness and think there is no other, for I am addressing myself to their case at present, cannot themselves define one in a hundred of the words they use. They cannot define them extempore and at the moment when they use them, nor later (ordinarily) when they have had time to think on them with all their might, can they define them. When I came to make a Lecture or two for you on Imagination, I thought, in decency, I ought to tell to a dot what Imagination is, and I found I did not know. Then I consulted two or three metaphysicians, and I found they did not know. Then I came back to my own wisdom, took a deep dive into my own consciousness and

strove to evolve a definition from what I myself might inwardly have of Imagination. I evolved three corners of the thing—enough for my purpose as a lecturer—and the other corner is under water yet. Generally from two to three corners are under. I had all my life been wont to speak of Imagination ; and all my life the listeners to me had conceived that they knew what I meant ; but not a man of us could draw a clear line around that thing, and make it stand out in absolute separateness from every other human faculty.

Such is language, Young Gentlemen,—the instrument we are all using so fully, and looking intelligent while we use ; the instrument you will do your preaching with and draw up Creeds with, and wreak yourselves upon with great enthusiasm sometimes. Well, wreak on. I have no objection. I myself have been wreaking on it for the last hour or more. But let us not pretend that these dice we play with are perfect. If only they were, some questions would have been settled thousands of years ago. But how can they be settled when the coin of interchange is of indeterminate value ? How much are those dimes and half dollars and dollars, that are flying about in such helter-skelter fashion ? Nobody quite knows. Often, when a speaker passes a dollar, as he supposes, the man in the pew sees but ten cents in it. And occasionally the speaker's ten cents is worth a hundred dollars. The fact is, language as used is a semi-chaotic flux of incertitudes, wherein we are exercised most wholesomely for something better yet to come ; beatific visions, and other visions. Of course here and there in the welter there emerges a limited spot of solid land ; the ascertainable and ascertained ; and on those spots we sit down and have a dear good time. Not because such unsizable and stingy spots are so much in themselves, but being all we have they are valuable ; and besides, they show that spots emerged are possible in our case. If they are, we may hope for more of them gradually. At any rate, they are good spots to jump from and take with us when we are called to go out of this seeing in a glass darkly and knowing but in part.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease to be ;  
They are but broken lights of Thee,  
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith ; we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,  
A beam in darkness ; let it grow.



I do not quote these lines as accurately consecutive to what I have just been saying, in the form of them, but because in their spirit they are consecutive enough, and because in them I find that mingled confidence and half-pensive sense of limits which I find to be habitual within myself—that mental state which led me this week to write out this my last lecture to you for this year. I bid you farewell.

# THE SERVICE OF ART IN RELIGION.

(I.)

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That body of Christians with whom it has been my lot to be connected, is infested by what I consider a prejudice against the use of the beautiful in the service of religion ; which prejudice declares itself in divers ways, such as :

First, an altogether too powerful array of unarchitectural and unadorned church edifices :—edifices that may shelter the people from storms, but do not in the least minister to culture, besides being deficient in several other respects.

Secondly, in a strong dread of—not to say contempt for—everything decorative, or symbolic, in connection with religion and religious worship ; the entire elaborated symbolism, painting, and sculpture of the Church of God at large, being lumped together as suspicious and swept away at a stroke :—the Cross, as recalling the passion of the Lord and the deepest idea of the Christian life, being repudiated almost as energetically by some, as the more far-fetched and artificial symbols whereon men have doted. There must be no sculpture in the house of God. And there must be no painting—none, at least, that has any meaning in it. There may be frescoes, perhaps, and in scattered instances profusions of color have been let in ; but the rule has been that the instant those colors proposed in any wise to express some divine thing, some scene in the life of the Lord, some great historical figure like an Apostle or a Martyr, some thought dear to the heart of universal man ; that over-vaulting ambition has been stamped upon, and stamped to death. So, not long

ago, in a certain city when I stepped in to look at the rejuvenated interior of a sacred building belonging to an historic and opulent church, lo ! I found myself in a gorgeous bar-room, or saloon, so far as the coloring was concerned ; and not even the well-chosen texts of Scripture strung along below the cornice in suitable, strong colors, could in anywise begin to redeem the thing and make a church of it.

Thirdly, our antipathy to the beautiful, shows itself in a four-square resistance of all hands to that most serviceable of the arts, Christian music, in its higher forms—in those forms, that is, which represent as no other contrivance of expression can, the inward life of man, in its multiformity, multiplexity and immeasurable yearning.

Fourthly, we are shy of all liturgical advance among us, suspecting that if public worship starts out deliberately and consciously to be decorous and perhaps beautiful, some enervation will manage to creep into our piety, some luxuriousness, some esthetic voluptuousness, at any rate some stiffness of formalism and resulting awful chill of death.

These are some of the tokens of our denominational suspiciousness towards the beautiful. Perhaps there are others ; but these are enough to indicate our trend. If I have seemed to speak pointedly of this matter, and with a flavor of disrespect, it is not because I want to be impudent or unfair or unloyal to my denomination. No ; what I am most after, is to make the thing I mean stand out and be distinctly visible. That I am not unfair, or unappreciative of these views whereof I have spoken, will appear, it may be, as I proceed now to name some of the sources of our Congregational aversion to esthetics—an aversion, I may add, wherein we have the sympathy of some other pious bodies of people.

I. To begin with, we are the descendants, both lineal and spiritual, (numbers of us lineal and all of us spiritual) of a certain historical, much-buffed, resolute and solid people, who by the grace of God discovered that the religion of their day and land had gone into affiliation and whoredom ( an affiliation that amounted to a whoredom) with Art—fine art—the arts of expression and impression—so that in that three-fold, good classification of all thinkable realities which Plato made out for us ; namely, the True, the Beautiful and the Good—the Beautiful had gone into the saddle, and was riding the other two—a most preposterous and profane thing, our Fathers said. So they shouldered in to right that. And after the

frequent manner of reformers, they righted it more than was necessary. Not merely did they unhorse the Beautiful and seat Religion in her vacant place, but they proceeded to have Religion ride over the prostrate Beautiful till her breath was clean gone out; her sculptures and paintings and millinery and pageants and even her innocent decorums, they annihilated; and her great and venerable cathedrals—the four walls that had harbored all the aforesaid frippery—came in for a share of their mighty disrespect. The reality in that movement was its sound intention to exalt religion, by separating it from its too great reliance on the esthetical, and establishing it on its own colossal and very sufficient foundations.

The noise of that contest has died away, and all is still as we look back there, but the heat of it keeps up, and it makes us who are successors of those men—I will not say hot, but obstinate. And yet, you see, there was an idea there. Even if our Fathers could have been persuaded to confess that Art has a legitimate function on earth, and even in religion a good function, they would have gone straight on to add:—Nevertheless, as things now are, the Church must be pulled away from all that, and totally weaned. Only thus can her salvation be secured, in the present emergency. Moderate drinking may be defensible, but she, the Church, has got where she cannot drink moderately. Her lust of beauty is too strong. If she takes one drop she is drunken. Let her be put on to bread and water, and there kept—perhaps forever, for her soul's health.

II. Moreover, the Fathers did not make this trenchant generalization against Art on an inspection of English Christianity alone, but on a survey of the ages. They looked abroad and afar and they noticed that the submergence of religion in the esthetic element had occurred a good many times and in many nations, and they surmised that there was a law of deterioration therein:—a rule that a religion must grow effeminate and carnal if she does not eschew Art pretty thoroughly. Witness Romanism, and the great Church of the East. Witness Greece, where fine Art reached such a splendor as the world never saw before. Did her Art save her? Did it not rather ungird her, slacken her sinews, enfeeble her hold on higher ideas than that of beauty, and enfeeble their hold on her, so that she must rot away in her entire substance and cease forever from among men. Go into the museum at Naples and look at the art-works of exhumed Pompeii. Mark their excellence. Notice

what a sense of the Beautiful that Pompeiian people must have had. But observe at the same time their unspeakable demoralization—their obscenity even in their art ; their fitness to be suddenly buried by the wrath of God, using his volcanoes to do the work. That was the way the Fathers were prone to reason. And we cannot deny that great devotion to beauty and Art, and great moral enfeeblement and corruption, have existed together often, whether one was the cause of the other or not. There was Lord Byron, there was Robert Burns, there was Tom Moore, there was the poet Shelley, and numbers more, three times worse than they, in whom the feeling for beauty, the sensitiveness to beauty, and the power of beautiful expression, the art instinct, was exceeding strong. Burns, Byron and Moore even wrote religious hymns, and did it well—much better than the average saint ever did ; but all these refined gifts of theirs did not make high-toned men of them. Beauty and the love of beauty did not establish the kingdom of God in their hearts.

I do not know but I am getting out the Puritan's argument for him in a way so strong and fascinating that I can never overthrow it. But I want to be fair, you see. I had rather make it overstrong and take the consequences, than to be mean enough to make it too weak.

III. Again : Puritanism claims sometimes, when it argues this subject, that the passing of our ideas, thoughts, feelings, forth into material embodiment in architecture, painting and all the rest, does by the necessity of the case make a materializing influence on the mind—an influence adverse to spirituality. That is the supreme peril of artists, it is thought. They deal with form. That is, their business is to formulate. If they could only be content to leave all human ideas and feelings unformulated, not made visible, not physicalized, in color and in lines and in all the cunning contrivances of their craft, all would be well ; but the plastic instinct in them is uncommonly strong and gives them no peace until they have reduced the ideal to a finite and sensuous statement of some sort ; and they must take the curse of this their own restless inability to just abide in the ideal, the unstated, the unphysicalized. If only while they were stating they did not supremely concentrate their attention on form, they might still be saved ; but it lies in the nature of their business that they should thus concentrate ; they would not be artists unless they did. So on they go, poor things, preparing the means of a quite possible ruin for themselves, and an equal danger for all people who are very much given to beholding their beautiful works.



The physicalization of the mind, incident to all artistic expression :—that is the argument.

And similar to that is the notion that many great Christian ideas, when circumscribed by the terms, color and what not, which the artist uses, are so much circumscribed as to be belittled and almost or quite profaned. Let them remain forever unexpressed. In the Vatican Palace at Rome, I recollect seeing somewhere a representation of God the Father, by Michael Angelo, if I remember aright. God the Father, was set forth by this most insufficient and awfully minimizing device ; namely, the head and shoulders of a respectable looking old man. There are many things which one might say about such a performance as that ;—and some things might be said in regard to the frequent efforts of ancient art to portray our blessed Lord ; but all I need to say just now is what all of us do probably feel, that while numberless religious truths, events and persons, cannot be put into form adequately, some cannot at all, and had therefore better be carefully let alone, even by such a magnificent genius as Michael Angelo, and much more by that swarm of lesser men who have ventured upon divine themes.

Well, people of the Puritan way of thinking, enlarge that observation to cover all efforts of art in the religious field. Religion suffers, they say, by being subjected to expression in the close-cramped terminology of the painter's and sculptor's art. I suppose they would concede a little more to music. So I should hope, at all events.

IV. Once more, we Congregationalists revert admiringly and lovingly to a certain solid, world-impressing cultus generations back in our denominational history ; an immensely seminal affair as regards the civilization that has unfolded on this continent, to our great glory before all nations ; a cultus full of God, and every conceivable moral tonic. But that very cultus, we remember, was associated with great bareness of Art, as was natural in view of our very Protestant origin in England (as already explained), and so now we find ourselves tender in our hearts towards bareness of Art, and not unwilling to have it perpetuated among us, as it visibly is ; we impute to that bareness the renown of that great cultus back there, with which it was connected ; we are under the beguilement of association. A white meeting-house is a staring discord of color in any green landscape, and nothing better than a monotony in any landscape of snow ; but those redoubtable progenitors of ours

worshiped in such, and we want to. If they had been puling creatures, and nothing to be proud of, we might have given in on the white meeting-house question and let the laws of color have their way and our church edifices melt harmoniously into the color-tones of Nature ; but they were not puling, but great, and they shall not be dishonored by having anything abolished that belongs to the thought of them and their life, whether building, psalm tune, ritual, ecclesiasticism, or anything else. A quite noble feeling in itself considered, no doubt. The only question is whether that ancient cultus cannot be preserved in the core and power of it, without an everlasting sanctification of its incidentals in this manner.

V. Another thing. Our Fathers were burdened by great practical tasks in this new country, which consumed their entire vigor, so that it was not possible for them to indulge themselves in even innocent flirtations with Art—and we their descendants are in something of the same difficulty.

VI. Moreover, in those scattered instances where we have emancipated ourselves from that primeval art a little, we sometimes have committed the fundamental mistake of discarding utility for the sake of beauty, building fine churches under a supreme medieval impulse, which were indeed very fine to look upon, but very faulty in regard to air and light and hearing : all essentials to healthy worship. Also in music, when we have pulled away from the tune “Mear,” and from “China,” and from other like solemnizing strains wherein the ancients worshiped, we have occasionally been taken with headiness and vamping, (not to say capering) and have let music run away with us ; and in the matter of decorations (as in that saloon church that I inspected) we have sometimes done things that make the simplicity of the Fathers seem good and sweet. All mistakes of that sort get quoted profusely, of course, as so many arguments against mingling esthetics with religion. I have no time to make a list of these mistakes. Neither have I time to draw out all the other strong points made by the Puritan reasoner on the subject of Art and Religion. I will only add on this general branch of my theme :

VII. That we, the Congregationalists, have no such special connections with a transatlantic Christian body, as the Protestant Episcopalians and the Romanists have ; so that while they are greatly influenced, on the side of sacred art, by the art culture of those foreign bodies, we have the advantage of almost no foreign

influence whatever. Their church art is almost dominated by the old-world civilization. Whereinsoever, under the limitations of American life, they can expatiate in Art, they are apt to expatiate along historic and accredited lines. Among us, on the other hand, each parish committee expatiates along its own lines. Not only are the committee mostly unconscious of the art-wisdom that for ages has been accumulating in foreign lands, but they are largely unaware of what wisdom has happened to accumulate here in their own denomination; because the denomination is, perhaps, the least organized, and the least compacted into a corporate consciousness, of any on the continent. In matters doctrinal we manage to diffuse through the whole body the sense of the whole; but in matters of religious art we diffuse much less, so that misbuilt church edifices and misconceived rituals, and misbegotten church music, and inexpressive and indefensible ornamentations, and a stiff-necked localism, are more common among us than is agreeable.

My Brethren, I make a complete turn now, against this whole prejudice in regard to Art. That side has had the floor long enough. I perceive its plausibilities. I acknowledge the realities that are sprinkled along through its argument. I agree that as between Religion and Art, art must give way to religion in every contest. It must, and it ought to. Moreover it does. Sooner or later it does. And it always will. For religion is superior to art. We can live without art. We cannot live without religion.

But I contend that God meant art to be the handmaid of religion, and if, in any instance, they are found to be adverse one to the other, it is the work of perverse men and Satan; even as good marriages are sometimes muddled by intermeddlers, and men and women who are made to pull together do not.

On the general question of beauty and its function, and whether it has a function, I submit the following observations. I hope they will go to your hearts. Even if they do not convince you, may they go to your hearts and trouble you and start inquiry.

First, what does it mean that a perception of the Beautiful, and a sensitiveness to the Beautiful, is a universal feature of the human race? Given any development whatever, that feature emerges. The lowest savage has his esthetics, such as they are. An animal has not. The beaver and the bird and the squirrel and the bee do some praiseworthy building. The carpentry of the beaver will bear examination, as well as the architecture of Giotto. The

nest of the bird and the honey-cell of the bee and the structure of the coral are in curves, and have that appeal to our sense of beauty. But it was not the beauty of the curves that those creatures intended ; their utility, rather, if they intended anything (which they did not.) The bird's curved nest fits his body snug and good ; and makes him feel well in his long broodings there in the woods. And the cell of the bee is good structure. And so on. As to intention, all that was in the God who made the creature and fitted him to do wise things without being wise. But even God seems not to have intended beauty in this matter so much as use ; unless you go clear back and say—he made the bird in curves instead of rectangularly, because curved birds are most beautiful ; and then having curved creatures on hand, inspired those creatures to fashion their homes to correspond. But what I wish to get to is, that man alone among creatures has esthetic perception and sensibility. He knows a zig-zag when he sees it, and he does not like its look. He knows that certain colors do not blend and that others do. And the unblended jar him. The blended affect him like music. He knows the difference between a space enclosed by an arch and a space enclosed by right lines, and evermore gravitates to the arch. It is of no account for the present, why he does it ; I simply say he does it. And what does it mean that he is forever doing those things ? Why did God make him in just that fashion ? In order that he should eschew the Beautiful and turn it to no account in his own development, and make no use of it in the way of joy ? Did God give hunger in order that we should never eat, and ears in order that we never hear, and feet for the solemn purpose that we always sit still ? No, all constitutional faculties, love of beauty among the rest, are for something ; that is, to be exercised.

Secondly, why has the Creator created such a delightful world and universe as this all about us ? It looks as though he himself were a beauty-lover. Of course he is. Shall he make a beauty-lover—man—and not be in that respect like his man ? Is that credible ? If God does not like rainbows and the gracious sweep of horizons, and the sparkle of dewdrops, and the tinges, tints and celestial purities of skies, why does he flood such fairnesses forth ? Also, why has he established that unchangeable mathematical basis on which musical harmonies repose, if he had not real interest in harmony. Then, too, why does he make this overwhelming appeal of created beauty to us, if he did not desire us to respond to it ? Is

God a man that he should be a tempter, and lead his feeble offspring into that which must injure them?

Thirdly, why did he do a similar venturesome thing and impel his chosen writers of the Bible to walk abroad upon the creation in such unrestrainable delight in its beauties? The more he inspired them the more they put forth just that trait. When he left them alone to write honest history, in the exercise of their own honest faculties, there was nothing particularly esthetic, imaginative, poetic, ideal, tuneful, lyrical in their movement; but the moment he filled them with his Spirit, for some transcendent spiritual purpose, they were lifted out of all that. Their language became cadenced, it was singing, they rhymed. Next, they filled their tuneful outflow with personalizations of the forms and forces of Nature, and with those personalizations they affectionately communed, as with very persons.

Next, they filled all creation with God, and made it alive; the thunders were his voice, the clouds and the thick darkness were his pavilion, the stars were his flocks which he led out shepherd-like—in short, their utterances were supremely beautiful. Poor old Jacob when he was dying, had no natural strength to make a poem, even if he ever had; but he did make one, and the way he luxuriated in the images of Nature was wonderful:—what he undertook to describe was far away and transcendental, not physical; but unconsciously his vocabulary was concrete, naturalistic and imaginative to a high degree. Judah, thou art a lion's whelp, said the prophetic old man; Issachar, thou art a strong ass, crouching down between two burdens—Dan, thou art a serpent in the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward—Naphtali, thou art a hind let loose—Benjamin, thou art a ravening wolf—Joseph, thou art a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over a wall. But it was that predestinated and preeminent Son, Judah, upon whom he most laid out the strength of his seership, and most affluently covered with his imagery. Perhaps we cannot minutely interpret all his words, but listen to the sound of them; Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up. He stooped down, he couched as a lion and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine,



he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes : his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. What a luxuriant effusion ! How instinctively when God's Spirit was flooding him he ran forth into God's world, its exuberance, its freshness, its exhaustless multiformity, its pure beauty, for his materials of expression.

And coming down to the New Testament it must suffice to say that our Lord himself evidently had a deep satisfaction in the fascinations of Nature, and did not hold himself back therefrom. I plainly hear the beating of his heart towards all beauty, in such a passage as : "Consider the lilies how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet, I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these." No man could make that comparison between Solomon and the lilies, and so praise their array, whose eye and feeling were not at the moment saturated with their beauty. I have heard that sentence—'Consider the lilies,' sung so often and with such impressive sweetness, that I cannot dissociate it from the music ; and am liable therefore to find in it heart-warmths and many things that are of the music rather than of it—the influences of such associations being very insinuating and subtle ;—but I chose rather to think that music has done in this case what it is able to do, and was designed to do, in all cases where it carries, explains upon and unfolds divine themes ; namely, it has but taken me into the otherwise undiscoverable profundities of the words of Jesus ; it has given me to hear the flow of their inner melody, it has told me how he felt when he spoke as he did.

My exegetical commentator on the passage, informs me that the language indicates that Jesus, when he said lilies, did not mean lilies in mass, or the genus lily, but that he fixed his attention on the individual lily. Well, I knew he did without being told. My music which I have heard seemed to tell me as much as that. A generalized love is a good thing, but a love that individualizes is much more fervid and touching. When the word, Consider the lilies, springs from a specific observation of lilies at the moment and a brooding on them one by one, it needs music for the rendering of its whole precious sense.

But I return to my question, if beauty has no great and useful function, why did God, when he inspired men to write, set them revelling in it as he did ?

Fourthly, still speaking of things that I find in the Bible, please

tell me why God commanded that the place where he was to be worshiped by his people Israel should be such a very fine place? There was goodly architecture, as good and costly as could be at the time. There was great carefulness of ornament—carefulness and cost. The whole matter was specifically laid down and enjoined; a hanging, a touch of color, a socket, a nothing-at-all (as we should say), as precisely and imperatively laid down as the Mercy Seat and the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies. And then, inside of all this glory, a ritual was forever to move on full of circumstance and decorum, more circumstance and carefulness, three times, than was necessary to any ends of use. It is thought by many in these days that beauty is too much of a beguilement to be let into God's house and service. It tends to materialize the mind. It leads off into sensuousness. It fixes our attention on things that can never save the soul. God's service has come to be a spectacle—a physical spectacle—in the Roman Church. And how can that be avoided, if you multiply physicals, and set people rejoicing in their eyes and their ears. Well, what people were ever more facile in getting themselves out of spirituality into sense, and even into the bottomless ditch of carnalism, than the Jews, unto whom God appointed architecture, ceremony, beauty, pomp, spectaculars and so on? Why was he not more cautious? If esthetics are a spurious element in religion, essentially and eternally; or if while not necessarily spurious, the bearing of them is bad practically and on the whole, human nature being so perverse that it can turn a good thing into a curse, any time,—how could God institute that for his Jews, that external religious system to which I have adverted? I am glad that he has given us such a full account of it as he has, so that we may know for certain and forever, how far art, beauty, ornamentation, cost, sumptuousness, gorgeousness, sublimity and the rest, may reasonably go, in helping religion. Of course all the arts when they start out to benefit religion, in any given time, place nation or Christian body, must be wise as serpents in adjusting themselves to said time, place and people. We Congregationalists do not want any Holy of Holies, nor any High Priest, nor sprinklings, nor incensings, nor arks; but we may well have as much as these in other forms suited to our rather austere and perhaps grim peculiarities. Speaking of grimness, I can recollect the time when to me, the young son of a Methodist minister, the Congregationalists were the grimmest thing I had yet ever heard of. We did not call

them Congregationalists, my Father and I, no, we called them Calvinists ; a word of terror much more than the other—as indeed it is to this day. Well, when Beauty undertakes to prepare something fitted to Calvinists, she must look out for herself and not be too ornate. The glory of Solomon and his temple are too much of an array for them. Calvin himself would endure a more elaborated externalism than these his children. The building where he preached so long in Geneva, was and is quite a building. And the liturgy that he used was quite a formal instrument of worship. Either one of them would almost shock a Calvinistic congregation back in one of our steadfast hill towns, with their weekly Lord's day extemporizations and their right-angled edifice with its undimmed white light, its white paint, its green blinds and its dear Puritan memories.

I know the stock argument against all this that I have been saying, in regard to the decorous and decorative aspects of the Israelitish system :—it is said that a new era came in when Jesus came, he being opposed to those foregoing indulgences in the sensuous, and desirous that the interior and the spiritual should now come to the front and have its day. No doubt there is a grain of truth in that view. And that grain of truth is exactly this, that while under the old order, all such things as institutions, ceremonies, seemlinesses and beautifications, were secured by objective command ; under the blessed order of this Messianic period, objective command has gone into comparative disuse, and in lieu thereof we have what the elder world never had, the indwelling Holy Ghost, the first gift of the ascended Lord, to set all things in order in the Church ; all things I say ; doctrines, politics, rituals, clerical orders, religious art, everything you can think of—which subjective method is inferior to the old one, as letting in a more or less occasional fallibility, the old one being precisionism made perfect. For example, there was absolutely no chance for the builders of the tabernacle or the architects of the temple, to mistake God's desire touching the structure thereof at any least point, or as to any least touch of adornment ; nevertheless, the new method, the method of the Holy Ghost, operating in souls and in the Church to get things done, is, beyond all expression, an advance on the old one as respects the supreme things to be secured—as much in advance, for aught I know, as the anti-typal Lamb of Calvary was an advance on all preceding sacrifices. My Brethren, there was never a great teacher or founder on earth who was less an institutionalist, in the

sense of personally instituting things, reforms, systems and all sorts of exterior elaborations, than Jesus ; but there was never on earth an institutionalist so prolific as he, in the sense that from him and his resurrection life, carried into individual souls through the Holy Ghost, institutions were to come—institutions, rituals, arts, literatures, laws, philosophies—a prodigal outflowing, wide as the world and as perennial as the tree of life by the “pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Ah yes ! he is the tree of life. All earth-born growths must wither. Only the fruitages of the Holy Ghost abide. Even the arts, that have no supernatural root, are perishable, or whereinssoever they survive they serve a distinctly second-rate use. And if you ask me what I have to say in respect to the perpetuity and the eternal monarchy of Greek art, this is my answer ; that in so far as Greek art, at any period, or in any instance, was the product of religion, it had in it that condition of longevity on which I insist ; and in so far as it was not, but was moved by a finite impulse, and confined itself to a finite range, while it is the best thing of the kind the world ever saw, I suppose, yet the kind is secondary, and it were possible to show that, adding together all the elements of transcendent art, such as technical ability, formulative power, noble aims, profound feeling and wealth of ideas, Christian Art is immensely the queen over classical ; and whatever may be the value of classical models (and certainly it is very great), if Christian Art does not take the lead by far, as a factor in modern civilization, the reason will be, that too many Puritan folk contrive to get themselves born—persons, that is, that do not see all sides of the salvation which is provided for modern life.

I was speaking of the era of the Holy Ghost ; of its fallibility as compared with the old era and of its superiority, nevertheless. It would take me too far out of my way to expand that matter, and forestall all possible misapprehension of what I have said. I do not deny that the great Teacher laid down some objective standards. Certainly he did. Still, it is true, as a general remark, that the work of formulation, doctrinal, institutional, ritual, ecclesiastical, esthetic and all the rest, was left to men in whom the Holy Ghost should be, when the Holy Ghost had finally come in that phenomenal coming, which made all prior comings so inconclusive and incomplete that Jesus could freely speak of them as no comings at all.

I come now to my fifth head of argument against what, for the

sake of convenience, I have called the Puritan urgency for the divorce of beauty and religion. I hope I shall not use that word Puritan so often as to create an impression that I have an uncongenial and unbrotherly feeling towards the people referred to—for I have not. For rhetorical purposes, I want to use them. And they are such a stalwart folk that they can bear a good deal of using—and even unjust use. They are inured to it, for generations.

But fifthly, I say :—that idea mentioned some time since, that over and over again, in the history of the world, the highest development of the Beautiful has coexisted with a low state of religion, and that therefore, the Beautiful, speaking by and large, is not only not nourishing to religion, but probably withering, I would like to make head against still further, by several running remarks, thus : if secular education tends to keep men out of the criminal class, as the statistics of that class do prove that it does, and as we should naturally expect it would ; is it not likely that the influence of beauty, considered merely as a secular force now, would also have a good moral bearing? And again, how often do we see persons of the highest esthetic development, who at the same time are sound, strong, inflexible and sweet religiously ! I have in mind now a man whose piety is a most admirable compound of staunchness and tenderness, a man who would rise to martyrdom on a fair call with absolute spontaneity,—all the moral grit of his New England progenitors is in him undiminished—so much so as to be a matter of remark—and yet it is almost an amusement to notice how intoxicated that heart is in the presence of the goodly scenes of Nature, how sometimes his soul within him will almost liquefy before a choice painting, and how a use of language, in a public speaker, for instance, that is terse, pat, vital, full of noble intention, and in supreme art, will give him so much pleasure that he can hardly utter his feeling. These instances are common enough on earth, my Brethren. And in every great public emergency that comes up, like war after a long period of peace, culture and easy living, during which a great many men and women have given a good deal of attention and interest to the embellishments of life, or life in its esthetic aspects, and have come to be considered dilettante, unrobust, lisping, people of the rosebud and perfumery order—so considered by the uncultivated multitude—behold, these supposed man-milliners and fashion-plates, these enervate creatures, these New York Seventh Regiment ornamental men, go down to the field of death as gallantly and cheerily, and with as iron



a manhood as though they had never once seen a picture or a party, or a fashionable coat with a rosebud in the buttonhole thereof—side by side they go with the men of the shop, factory and farm, these sons of culture, these emasculates, facing all things of peril and endurance. How very often that is so. Often enough, at any rate, to show that the influence of high civilization is not necessarily degrading and enfeebling.

Consider, once more, that aside from material beauty, we have no images wherewith to represent the beauty immaterial, the beauty of a thought, the beauty of an intellectual structure (as an essay or a discourse or a poem), the beauty of innumerable beautiful feelings and the beauty of holiness. It cannot be that material beauty is debauching, or that it is so far dangerous that we had better keep away from it, when all these beautiful, holy and precious interior things—(the things of the soul for whose preservation beauty external must be shunned, it is thought)—cannot be at all formulated and put into circulation, except in the use of the material, the physical, the sensuous. The deep subject of language I cannot enter ; especially as I did try to enter it when I spoke to you last year and had some points to carry ; but how far does one need to enter it to discover the divine use of beauty as a vocabulary for the soul? When I look at the eternal whiteness of a far-away Alpine summit, I call it holy and awful in its holiness ; but that only means that yonder immaculate mountain-head is an image ; a suitable and therefore ordained image of a certain supreme moral quality in God, angels and men. Some Sybarite, beholding that Alp, may not be moralized by it ; it is even conceivable that he may simply turn it in among his luxuries and there stop ; just as many a Church goer makes the means of God's grace to be a savor of death to his miserable soul ; but that is not the fault of the Alp. The Alp is all right. That snow is holy. So holy that many of us are nearly heart-broken while we stand down in the valley and look up at it. Down in the valley ! Sure enough, there we are. In the valley of unholiness ; cleansed by the washing of regeneration, perchance, but not stainless—and yet not hopeless quite, because from skyey heights out infinitely beyond the utmost Alp, there comes to us a word of hope, saying, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah understood imagery, and he knew that white is one of God's chosen soul-terms—a touch of the sensible whereon there plays forever a touch, a glory of the supersensible.

And so I might move through the entire creation and find everywhere the moral and spiritual. The creation and we stand over against each other in an appointed, detailed, wonderful correspondence. It was my privilege last year, in my lecture on the Vague Elements in Language, to show how even the infinite may be effectively set forth in finite contrivances of expression. And I doubt whether any impression of the infinite ever received by man is wholly void of a moral element. The infinite, at any rate, is serious, grave by its very size ; and when you get as far as seriousness, you cannot be far from the border-lines of the moral. Now the sweep of curved lines is one of the ways of indicating the infinite—not the sweep of circles, because they are too full of the intimation that they get around and come full circle by and by ; the moment a curve completes its curve and joins, it becomes a finite image ; but these curves that curve slowly and take forever to get around, are, to our feeling, as though they never did get around. For a thing that moves on and moves on and never stops moving, that shadows forth the infinite for us ; and all my experience is that when I get upon such a journey as that, I feel pretty solemn, and as though I wanted no reprehensible thought or emotion to come into me.

A similar moral or semi-moral effect can be wrought upon us by the skilful use of colors ; and it is the very divinity of pictorial art that it can do such things. Many landscape painters understand all about this. And a painter does not amount to much unless he does. He who paints a bare boulder even in simple definiteness—that is, in an exact, cold reproduction of its finiteness, has abused the boulder. What did that boulder ever do that entitles it to such treatment ! Nobody ought to be painted in his utmost literalness. That is knowing him after the flesh, as St. Paul expressed it. A human face should be painted suggestively. A face at any given instant, at the instant, say, when the artist is looking at it in order to paint it, has a certain kind and amount of expression, but that man there sitting to be looked at and painted, has in him quantities of kinds and amounts of things, not present in that one moment, or one hour, of that face. Therefore it is an exceedingly fragmentary and insulting performance to paint him as he then is, and have that pass down to all generations, as the man. It is not the man. It requires a very roundabout exploration to know a man. Moreover, when you do know him, in his actualities, you have no right to paint him so. If we all had in us nothing but our actualities, we should

be small affairs ; and hardly worth painting. Our potentialities are the greatest thing about us. That is so even with heathen men. But since Jesus has come and redeemed men, their potentialities have been greatly enlarged and manifolded ; and they must be painted accordingly. Paint a man at his best ; not only as what he has made himself to be so far, but paint him according to what he is germinally, and what he may be when those precious germinals have received the whole stimulation of the grace of God. In other words, idealize him. Or, in still other words, make a little show of the infinite in him, here and there. Those who love the man will applaud your fine veracity in the matter, your ideal veracity, if nobody else does.

So the boulder, so anything. Treat all suggestively. Spread a little warmth over your rock. Mellow it. Put a heart into it. For it is a curious and beautiful fact, that every visible thing has a heart, when closely studied ; like Alfred Tennyson's tree that the maiden kissed and kissed and then kissed again, because she found a dear name cut on it ; until the tree could stand it no longer but spoke up and said :

Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirred ;  
And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discerned,  
Like those blind motions of the spring,  
That show the year is turned.

Tennyson can hardly be charged with exaggeration here. Every thing has a heart. And there is nothing more admirable and wholesome in fine art, from the beginning, than modern landscape work, for the one reason that it has passed clear beyond the bewitching finitude of Greek achievement, into the deeper and more solemn witchery of a statement from the interior ; which statement of Nature from the interior is large, vague, vast and practically infinite, because it is from the interior ; or, in other words, because it takes Nature in its expression as having meanings, meanings intellectual, meanings moral, meanings spiritual, meanings affectional.

I was saying that as lines have power to suggest the infinite, so have colors. And how do they do it? In various ways. Please remember, I am trying to illustrate the thought that material beauty

cannot be, to be shunned, as some claim, because beauty supersensible, the different forms of soul-beauty, are not to be set forth otherwise than in terms of material beauty, or the beauty of the world ; and I have drifted into a cognate thought, by way of illustration, the thought that material things can represent to us and make us feel the infinite. Lines can do this and so can colors. When a painter starts you down a vista that has no end, he has started in you the vagueness of the infinite. When a painter has hinted, but not painted, the depths of the ocean, he has done the same thing. When a painter, along his far away sky-line, has drawn a color-tone which says that beyond the horizon there, out of sight, sweeps a boundless stretch of sea, he has given into your soul the whole immeasurable suggestiveness of sea. Not even when you stand on the sea-shore, and look off, are you so immersed in the infinite, as when you mark that painter's line of color. On the shore, outlooking, your eye reaches an horizon. To be sure, you do not stop there, still that horizon jars you and mars the full impression of infinity upon you from the endless waters. But in the picture, you see neither sea nor horizon, but the sea is suggested without a thought of horizon. Everything is left without boundaries. You have a statement whose main value is in what it does not state. These are some of the ways of impression open to the color-master.

I have heard the superiority of classical art attributed to the finiteness of classical subjects. It is possible, it was said, to formulate perfectly, as the Greeks did, ideas as limited as the Greek ideas were. But since Christianity has come with its glorious enlargements, its many ideas that shade off into mystery and have their principal effect as being mysterious, the old-time, absolute Greek formulation—that has been the fascination of the world ever since—must be given up, of course, and art, as art, must take an eternal inferiority, it is thought. Why undertake to harness art to religion, when the chief contents of religion are essentially unstatable by art.

That difficulty and some others, I may get at in another lecture. Meanwhile, have I not at least nibbled around the edges of it, in what I have said? Modern art can state the large Christian ideas. It had better let alone trying to state the Almighty in a Vatican fresco of an old man. And a few more impossibles it had better let alone. But nine-tenths of all that Christianity has brought in, can be stated in a way to make about all the impression a human soul can bear. And even the Almighty can be set forth, if we cease from the

folly of bodily parts and just describe on the canvas the great works that so reveal him. I never look at the ocean or at a terrible storm, or at the sky of night, or at the mighty mountains of a land like Switzerland, without an impression of God that is practically infinite. And in so far as such things can be painted, God is made known art-wise. The modern machinery for embodying the infinite is good.

I have spoken of lines and colors, but I have said nothing of music. And music is the one art that is most serviceable for the setting forth of those Christian ideas and experiences whose dimensions, and whose celestial qualities, are supposed by some to be unstatable essentially and forever. I say they are not. I imagine that music was born for that purpose, principally. What did the Greeks know about music, comparatively? Nothing. No, music was waiting for the Messiah and his kingdom. Waiting for the Holy Ghost to get into souls, and start there all sorts of mysterious commotions; penitences, exultations, aspirations, expectations, sweet loves, a whole world of life that the ancients did not know. Music waited for that; and when that came she came, last-born of God, with her hymns, anthems, oratorios and marvels many; marvels of composition not only, but marvellous new instruments, and instrumental combinations; instruments that almost articulate and often seem to know and be glad for the divine service they are in. God hasten the day when every Christian man shall know music.



# THE SERVICE OF ART IN RELIGION.

## (II.)

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It is sometimes mentioned as a reason why art should never be invoked in aid of religion, that the very act of putting ideas or inward experiences of any sort into form, as in art, is deteriorating in its tendency to the man so doing and to all people who consent to commune with and enjoy his work. Ideas or feelings, if let alone and left to be in the mind simply ideas and feelings, are less dangerous morally than they are if externalized, and especially if externalized in terms of beauty. Perhaps if they were externalized in thorough-going ugliness, they would be less to be feared, but the moment they are charming or even pleasant, the trouble begins, and all concerned are demoralized unless they set a guard against the beguiler. Well, those of us who are conversant with Holy Writ, do not need to be told that the physical is quite an inlet of evil for men ; and even those of us who are simply observant of what goes on in our own selves, have come to know the same thing ; Holy Writ in this case, as in many others, being simply an authoritative statement of what is true and easily discoverable, Bible or no Bible. But if the Bible is explicit on the dangers of the physical, the external, the sensuous, it is equally explicit on the more subtle and vastly more unrelishable point that evil has its seat and all its potency in the soul of man, and not in externals ; so that ideas unformulated, unexternalized, unembodied, are not always such tremendously innocent things after all. Leave them alone in the mind and never speak them forth

in any form, and they would fester there and work corruption as energetically as you please. However, I am not disposed to insist upon that, to-day. It is so, but let it go. I grant that formulation has its perils. Formulation is the occasion—the occasion if it is not the cause—of religious degeneration in countless cases. It is claimed that it tends to degeneration in all cases. Well, admit even that. I do not feel myself compelled, in order to reach the ends I seek here, to resist the very radical statement, that always when tangible embodiment of soul-facts is attempted, whether in art or in anything else, a distinct moral risk is incurred ; and that therefore all the arts of expression are to be diligently watched.

But now just notice a few plain things. First, that our Maker in giving us bodies, has indicated his wish that we should externalize and take the risk of it. He externalized us ; then why should we not proceed to perpetually externalize ourselves in all kinds of utterance, pictures, sculptures, music, rhetoric, architecture, gesture, oratory : and in that oftentimes most affirmative and impressive of all utterances or self-embodiments, silence ; that fine-art which occasionally a silent man like Grant has perfected. A soul taken singly and alone is not a man. A man is an incorporated soul. There is a good deal of talk abroad about “ saving souls.” Christ Jesus did not come into the world to save souls, but men. And the gist of the scriptural doctrine of the resurrection is, that each man of us is saved in his totality—not a ghost but a man (which a ghost never was). Well then, if a man is not a man except as he is corporealized, neither is a thought a thought, nor a feeling a feeling, unless it is corporealized or embodied or formulated. I will show that more minutely a little farther on. For the present I assert it and say moreover, that whether that assertion be true or not, it is true that God’s creating us soul and body, points to, suggests and legitimates the bodying forth of our inner and spiritual selves in suitable forms ; such as our wit can devise and such as seem to effectually do the business for us.

Further I wish to ask, how are we ever to have the least human intercourse, if we do not get out into these embodiments whereof I speak ; into language, into painting, into music, into abiding structures and so on ? I sometimes notice that the horses in the field put their noses together and have a protracted season of silent fellowship. We have not yet come to that fine clairvoyance. Or rather, I should say that we are capable of silent fellowship, but have

numerous things to say for which mere silence is not enough. When a man's wife is silent to him sometimes, it is a saying to him as much as he can stand at the time ; but in the long run of life our minds and our hearts get full of things that cannot begin to be expressed in the simple alphabet of silence. The horse is not so. His consciousness is pretty simple on the whole, I judge, and a simple language therefore answers in his case. Our consciousness has a hundred-fold more contents and more complexity and we must have a hundred devices of expression, some of them very complex. There is no intercourse, I say, if externalization ceases.

But remember that only a part of our intercourse is with our contemporaries. I do not know but I have to do with the departed more than I have with the living. I read their books. I contemplate their arts. I listen to their music. I sit still and absorbent under the venerable influence of their cathedrals and their memorial structures. I go to their graves and read the inscriptions over them. I go up and down the earth on pilgrimages to those cities where the precious vestiges of them are particularly accumulated. But suppose these men and all the men of the past had been prejudiced against externalization, had not believed in memorials and vestiges and precious accumulations, but had consulted the horse—as Solomon said, Go to the ant—and had refused everything save the mutual touch of noses, so to speak. That would have answered a certain purpose for them, but not much of a purpose for us who want to recall them and realize them and get some profit from their experience. If each generation refuses to express itself, then every generation must make the experience of life entirely uninstructed by all past experiments. What an unaccumulative and unprogressive race the human race would then be, like to the very animals of the field.

I was saying a little while ago, that as a man is not a man unless embodied, so a thought is not a thought unless embodied. And now look at that.

On the sharp question whether the mind of man can think otherwise than in forms of the outward—sense-forms—I am not anxious to speak ; but on the question whether the mind does habitually and chronically draw on the external for its moulds of thought, anybody may speak who ever took the trouble to examine his own practice in the matter. We think in words, generally we do. Everybody does. It is instinctive with us. We were made to.

If all men breathe, they were made to breathe. And if they all think embodied thoughts God meant they should. But if my unexpressed thoughts are thus formulated in fact within me, and proceed in terms of structural coherency and logic, and in terms of beauty often; behold I am already in the perilous trap of a practical externalization—interior and mental externalization. Perhaps I am not much degenerated by it; nevertheless there is a sense-process going on in me. I am in commerce with externals in the privacy of my mind. The matrix of my thought savors of the physical. I may comfort myself with the notion that I am particularly unphysical, because I have not put my thought into any form that can be touched with the hands; but I am deluded. Jesus went to the root of this matter when he taught that a man need not advance so far as an overt act in order to be corrupted, but that the instant a reprehensible thought emerges into his consciousness, the whole strength of corruption is in him.

I say again: the instant I think a thought, the jeopardy of physicalization has begun, because that thought, following the customary process of human thought, clothes itself in a body borrowed from the outward. Metaphysicians sometimes fancy when they use language for the sharp purposes of their particular business, that they have triumphantly purged their terms of the colors and flavors of the outward world. They have eliminated the physical, or at any rate, whatever physical there may be left in their words they do not use in their processes of thought. But language is loth to be expurgated in that way. It was sense-born. It was physical in its origin. And it knows it and is not ashamed. So it holds on to its physical parentage. It holds on; there is an indestructible physical image in each word of it. The metaphysician may try not to have anything to do with that image, but the image is the vital essence of the word and when he is dead and gone and another generation come to read what he has left, often they hunt out his suppressed images, in order to get down into his real meaning; the fact being, after all, that those images, those physical elements, did always secretly determine even that metaphysician's use of language. There is a curious pertinacity here: a persistence as of a thing alive and wilful.

I said at the beginning that I was willing for the sake of argument to admit that there is in all cases a tendency towards an evil influence on men in all the arts of expression.

The moment a mind moves forth into embodiment, artistic or otherwise, it perils itself and everybody else. Let that be conceded, whether we need to concede it or not. And now it becomes very important to know what are our securities against that miserable tendency and especially in fine art ; what is our security? Are there any securities that are so secure as to make it worth while trying to wed art to religion ever? I propose to answer that question.

And first we must not undertake to get security by minimizing form, as the Congregationalists incline to do sometimes and other bodies much more. Form we must have on all accounts, and if we are to secure the ends of self-expression fully and the ends of impression fully, we must have of form not a little. The fact is, in several denominations those ends are not secured with any fulness. One might make a good lecture on the exact points of short-coming among the Quakers, for example, in that regard. There can be no complete and symmetrical doctrinal development, except by a complete and symmetrical development of form. Neither can there be any well-balanced and full-toned development of the religious life. Indeed there would not be such things as denominations, with their contrary polities and their contrary theologies, were it not for the inadequate and fragmentary rituals and form-systems of the Christian bodies. There would only be the Church Catholic, as there ought to be. I do not say that all men would think alike as to doctrine and polity, if they were all put into the discipline of the same forms ; absolute uniformity of opinion could never be ; but they would think alike so far, and particularly would be developed along the same lines and into the same types of religious experience so nearly, that they would have no heart for denominational subdivisions. I say subdivisions to indicate my sense of the disgraceful multiplicity of the separated folds. I have heard many fine arguments to show the great value of denominations ; but in my judgment, all real values could be better secured in a Catholic, or universal Church. I did not know that once, but I have known it for some years now. We must not undertake to defend ourselves from the possible debasement incident to Form by any extreme abridgement of Form.

Secondly, confining myself now to the arts that carry in them influences of beauty, I remark : beauty is safe enough always, and no one is morally relaxed by it when neither the artist nor the observer makes it an end in itself, but on the contrary, seeks ends intellectual, ethical and religious, and holds beauty strictly subordinate



and contributory thereto. I have struck now a fundamental chord in this whole matter. In any just and wholesome arrangement of the arts of expression, beauty is a subordinate element. And how do we know that? By what considerations do we show that beauty belongs down there under those other things; and begins to be a dissolvent of character, directly it is let out from under the same? Comparing the moral and religious influence of simple intellectualism with the moral and religious influence of beauty, it seems to me there is not much choice between them. A man under the supremacy of intellectualism is as much a sinner and as much in hell as a man under the supreme rule of beauty. It does not seem so at first; and if Jesus Christ had not come among us and given us the benefit of his awful stroke of moral analysis, we should never have got into this matter to any practical purpose. But he has come, and now intellectualism as the reigning purpose and joy of life has little to say for itself. It carries a man down always. It does not make him lackadaisical necessarily. On the contrary he may be exceedingly athletic and formidable. When John Milton portrayed Satan, he did not consider it necessary to make him a milksop nor to effeminate him at any point. He, Satan, was a very gifted person, and what he could not do no finite creature could. But intellectuality, a life moulded, modulated and marshalled under intellectual influences pure and simple, is perdition in every essential element of perdition. How then does it deserve to be put above the Beautiful as a supreme formative force?

I reply, the Beautiful, if let alone, does work emasculation in the matter of simple strength. It gradually kills the more strenuous elements in character. It undermines heroism. A solid nationality like the Puritan commonwealth cannot be built on it. Moreover I think it may be true that the Beautiful, as being more distinctly sensuous than the intellectual has a more direct affinity with practical sensualism than intellectualism has. I suspect that an examination of the facts of history, a reference to peoples and periods that have surrendered to the Beautiful, might show that to be so. So that the Beautiful does stand second to the intellectual as a good force in life. And it stands second to the ethical, of course. To settle that we have only to refer to the experiments made by individuals and by communities, with the ethical as a dominant factor of development. Let a man put his conscience and his religious nature of which his conscience is a part, in the ascendant, and what does he

come to? As a matter of fact, what does he come to? What kind of a man does he make? And how does he feel within his own self? Is he a happy man? Do his faculties in him act as though they felt that a spurious king was set over them when conscience was enthroned? Do they not rather show an utter contentment and pull along in their own particular function, each one blithely, singing even as the worlds sing, because they are marshalled so orderly? Also in every case what is the national result of an enthroned conscience? History has but one voice in this matter. On the other hand, what is the uniform consequence when such a faculty or impulse as vanity or combativeness or love of dominion or bodily lust reigns in a man or among a people? The innumerable intermeddlings with the monarchy of the conscience and religion, by the several other powers of man, overwhelmingly settle the question of the *de jure* power. So then the Beautiful must abdicate.

Or try the question in this way: Conceive the Beautiful as eliminated from the physical creation; would there be anything worth while left? Yes, we should still have structure and mass and utility. Quite an array of things solid and sizable; that is, if we include in the Beautiful only the esthetic conception. When we speak of structure, and of utility as resulting from structure, we have passed into the realm of intellectual beauty, to be sure, but we have not passed into esthetics strictly. A perfectly neutral universe, as regards esthetics, would be quite a universe, I say. So might an unesthetic man be quite a man, as is numerously proven every day. And a Deity too might be very adorable who did not love beauty and cared not to create a beautiful universe. But take from the Deity and from the man and from the universe every shred and semblance of the moral, or the intellectual, or the true, and what is there left? It would take a whole week's thinking to determine whether we had anything left. Certain it is that what was left would not be worth retaining—even as a man when dead is no longer worth keeping.

I propose to give now some concrete illustrations of an undue surrender to beauty. And as I have a company of embryo preachers before me, I will begin with the sermon. A man starts out to make a beautiful sermon. That is what he is after. I am ashamed to have anything to do with such a person, even for the purpose of illustration; but as such persons occasionally appear, and particularly as any preacher (especially a young one) is liable to be caught

in a temporary passion for the beautiful some day, and to get up discourses accordingly, I think I had better take hold of the case. Well, the beautiful sermon is started, and I will tell you what the man will do. He has already surrendered all intention of utility or usefulness. The homiletical impulse has vacated and the esthetical impulse has come in. A man who has come along so far as that may be looked to to do anything. First he proceeds to forget that the first beauty of a discourse—the first chronologically and the first logically—the beauty in fact without which no other real beauty is possible—lies in organization, and is not sensuous but intellectual. When God would make a beautiful man, he provides a frame for him, not any frame, but a frame that will hang together and be specific, a man's frame, not a brute's, and a frame not only that will hang together, but will hang together creditably, proportionally; no one member too long for the rest, or too short for the rest, or too heavy or too light; a skeleton which when clothed on with flesh will be seen to be beautiful and will pay for all the fleshly decoration. To decorate a malformation would be incongruous. Every malformed man, if he could have been permitted to put in a single word beforehand, would have said, "Please omit decoration and give me a form." I should like to be decorated and formed both, but if that is too much to ask, as between the two give me form. And that sermonizer ought to feel in the same way, but he does not. He wants decoration; decoration irrespective of the frame; decoration whether there be any frame or not.

As I am upon the subject of beautiful organization, I might as well say here, parenthetically, that I know of no one rule for securing it so important as this. Take the good of your congregation for your aim; not merely their general good, but their specific good through this subject you have chosen; get your intention high up in that way; clarify it; simplify it; state to yourself exactly what you are after; and then shape your materials, organize them heroically on that objective. And it will require some heroism. Your fondness for this and that in your accumulated material, will make you want to put it in. It is something you have labored on and dug out perhaps; or it is a scrap of learning; or there is a glitter of the ideal in it that pleases you; or it is a touch of pathos which might melt somebody. There are numerous temptations and you will need to be a hero and ask only, does that item bear naturally and directly on my objective? Moving among the heaps of good

stuff that you have got together, in that constant, courageous self-denial, you are apt to develop a plan of your subject that is simple, coherent, orderly, compact, with an all-engulfing trend, like the pull of a raceway; a veritable organism, a thing of beauty indeed—intellectual beauty. You did not aim at beauty. You aimed at use and God rewarded you for it by carrying you unconsciously into beauty, as he always does.

But our man whom we left a moment ago, does not propose to waste himself on such plain work as that. He does not choose to get beauty unconsciously, or to put up with a kind of beauty so little obvious to the multitude as beauty structural. If he can only get flesh, real pink flesh, something pretty and posy-like, he will run the risk of the frame. Well, it is an instructive fact that even posies have to have something to grow in or on. In order to satisfactory ornament, there must be something to ornament. Ornament considered as an independent beauty-spot, is one of the most ineffective and ridiculous of things. Ornament—ornament legitimate and telling—is simply and always the natural and spontaneous efflorescence of structure. How that one definition damns scores of ambitious art-works, sermons, buildings, paintings, musical products! It is a truism in architecture that all adornments must be congruous to the buildings that they undertake to adorn; a rule which I expressed in the essence of it, when I said adornment is structure efflorescent. That is, there must be so perfect harmony between a building and its decorations, that it is as though, and makes one feel as though, the building had blossomed. The congruity in question lies in several particulars. The ornaments must be suitable to the intention of the building. A gothic cathedral must not be called upon to blossom into ungothic or unreligious or pagan embellishments. Also the ornaments must be suitable to the structure of the building; and to its position and surroundings; and to some other things perhaps. But I must not get too far away from sermons. However I am not far away when I am naming the laws of congruity in art. For example, a sermon may be gothic or Moorish or Greek, or of the New England meeting-house type. Christianity is pretty diversified in its aspects and contents and admits a good variety of sermons, but Moorish embellishments on a gothic sermon, or Jeremy-Taylorisms festooning Jonathan Edwards, were grotesque. And a Moorish sermon at a funeral were scarcely the thing.

When it is once settled that a discourse is to be a sermon, a

multitude of beautiful things are ruled out. That one decision excludes them. Were it a political speech or a Fourth of July Oration, or an address of courtesy or a military proclamation or a nuptial discourse it would be different ; certain flowers might then be let in, which now must be foregone, and even an occasional spangle might not be offensive. But the precise point I wish to press just now is, that when the sermonizer has made the structure of his discourse beautiful he has virtually provided for every other beauty of pulpit utterance that is suitable and is possible to him. The mind that has the grace and the vigor and the moral purpose to organize such a structure as I have described, will find always as it moves along in the process of amplification upon that structure, that those very mental qualities which originated the structure, do also joyfully originate all along the decorations thereof ; congruous decorations, of course, because structure and decoration are the issue of the self-same mind ; the fine purpose in the man, that presided over his work of organization ; the purpose to do a definite good to a certain congregation, by the use of a certain subject, on a certain occasion. That purpose also presides over his entire movement through the subject when he comes to write it out, and infallibly selects suitable details of beauty, if indeed it be proper to say that he selects at all. He does not. No, out of such a mind as that, agitated by the work it is in, beauties spring of themselves. The man does not call them ; he simply ferments in the stress of noble endeavor, and they come. As he is but partially sanctified at best, and but imperfectly disciplined and cultured in his intellect, the probability is that some things will spring out of him that are more sumptuous than suitable ; heavy dabs of color that need to be reduced, heavy tones that do not harmonize with the general flow of his music ; ramping, sudden growths that spoil the proportions of his landscape ; spurts of energy that spurted before he knew it ; but such a man as he, will certainly see these things and go back upon them with a swift vengeance. He knows that a mere detail has no business to be springing into the foreground and attracting all observers, even if it be a bewitching detail in itself considered—it cannot be considered in itself ; it is but one thing in a great whole, and when one thing in a great whole sets up to be considered by itself, it has outraged the whole ; in proper subordination and congruity to the whole it can make its own valuable addition to the solid effect of the whole. Perhaps no one can detect that contribution, but it is there ; even as in a perfectly



blended chorus the most peeping voice tells to a mathematical certainty, though no mortal could find the same. But an insubordinate detail is a practical nuisance. It nullifies a sermon. That is, its whole effect is towards nullification. And when a sufficient number of insubordinate details assemble themselves in a sermon, with a conceit of their own fascination, a sermon is unshapely and spoiled.

And the man who starts to make a sermon that shall be beautiful, lands just there ; in no sermon at all, but in a miniature of what the universe would be, provided structure and structural melody were ignored all through it and the Creator had directed his undivided attention to sensuous beauty-effects. By the way, I suppose that word beauty, if we are going to be strict and further our own convenience in the discussion of beauty, should be confined to sensuous impressions and not be permitted to include any supersensible reality whatever. However I have shackled along so far without confining it, and possibly I can go on so to the end. By my reference to the sermon I have now illustrated our great means of security against beauty. It must be subjected to that intellectual thing, truth, and to that good thing, religion. Artists must go for intellectual and ethical ends supremely and for esthetic ends secondarily. And Churches and Christian denominations must seek art for moral ends and not just for the luxury and the ravishment of beauty.

Take it in architecture. First, certain utilities must be thoroughly made sure in a Church edifice. The building must accommodate the assembly. It must not be built in a way to tumble down, either the day of dedication or any other day to come. The materials must be as indestructible as is convenient and they must be put together to stay. The space enclosed by the walls must be convenient for the particular uses of the people who built them. The possibility of seeing and hearing must be attended to. Then again, in a building to be used for God's service, as that building is, every visible thing must be real. There should not be pretended cornices and pillars and architectural effects accomplished by hypocritical frescoes ; which frescoes are supposed to be most satisfactory according as they most nearly succeed in deceiving somebody. But after all these points of construction, utility and moral honesty are covered, the question of beauty comes in well.

May beauty come in? May art have a chance? The masons and the carpenters and all the utilitarians have had their chance or are to have, and now is there anything more? May we put any cost

on that building, over and above any conceivable utility, and make that cost simply an offering to Him? Will He feel like rejecting our precious ointment, if instead of selling it to convert heathen, we wastefully pour it out in that pious way? Moreover inasmuch as this building is for the one end of personal salvation, can we further that end by some efforts now that are artistic? Is a man saved as much as he might be when he is simply converted, or even sanctified? Is it any good to have his converted and sanctified soul refined? A refined saint seems to be more current in the world than an unrefined one. If you are about to come to close quarters with him, marry him for instance, you like him refined. If you are going to transact business with him, or do anything with him that brings you near enough to catch his insensible emanations, his magnetism as it is sometimes called, the more refined he is the better. You have no prejudice against his holiness or his good principles, but if in addition to that he is civilized, you have no objection. There is no such civilizer as regeneration by the spirit of God, taken in its effect, both direct and remote. That is so. Still, a person civilized to the extent of being regenerated, may for the time being be austere, uninformed, in part unmodulated and unrelishable. Therefore is there any way by which the Church building where he fondly worships can be turned in upon him for purposes of culture, and at the same time not retard his piety?

First of all, knowing as we do the rather stiffening effect of right lines, supposing we try curves on him a little, in the construction of the building. You get that man travelling along a curve and he has got to be graceful. Curves have insensible emanations as well as men, and the insensible emanations of a curve are very congenial and very improving, as compared to the insensible emanations of a zig-zag. Also if this curve that has taken hold of this man, winds off into mystery, as curves often will, that will do no hurt. That being led off into mystery may be an advantage to his present square-cut and realistic make-up, it may be, even modify his theology. It need not injure or alter the substance of his theology, but around that substance it may throw an atmosphere which, while it might not make much of a show on Fairbanks' standard scales, could easily be as valuable to this man as though it did. And then there is what John Milton has called a dim religious light, meaning to intimate, as I understand, that the light in question is religious because dim; though of course, as was also intimated by this same

Milton, the light gets a part of its religiousness from the fact that it is strained through

Storied windows richly dight—

through windows, that is, that have some sort of religious story to tell, and tell it ornately, in colors. Supposing we experiment on our man with that. Probably he is a strenuous and busy person all days, save Sunday, and cannot in the week be caught in that leisureliness of mind which is quite necessary to a full and deep impression upon his sensibilities by any good and Christian story. But here now in his pew he sits, with his work laid aside, with his best clothes and their silent culture on him, voluntarily offering himself to be impressed. To be sure, he mostly faces towards his minister, determined to receive impressions from that particular quarter; but when a man is intent in one direction, looking out his front door, all his side and back doors are so much the more exposed; just as people are run over by watching approaching trains more often than in any other way; the train they are not watching then gets its chance at them. Multitudes of people you cannot run over except as you get them looking out for a particular train. For example, there is many a hater of art and beauty in Churches, who has it for his established principle to watch the minister and repudiate the gothic or other fine architecture all about him as he sits, and the storied windows and the heavenly preaching of the choir; but I say unto you, verily, his side and back doors are exposed, and to such an extent that after a few years he is not the man he used to be, as some accidental test applied to him shows.

It is proposed to abolish the choir and to have congregational singing; and to his own surprise and alarm he discovers that he does not wish that to be done. Or his artistic edifice wherein he has sat so long burns up, and the disheartened and economical congregation are inclined to put up now that infinitely reiterated, unsculptured and unbedight edifice wherewith we are all familiar, when lo! he finds himself going over to the mystical Babylon again and advocating her fornications. He is the victim of insensible emanations. He knew that his preacher emanated. He always knew that. That is the preacher's avowed business. But he had not known that all these other influences were emanating; that the Gospel, when preached in a white-light interior, is not the same that it is when preached in a dim religious light, that dim religious light being also supported and carried home by the numerous other

esthetic blandishments which are apt to characterize a Church interior that has ventured along so far as to invoke the aid of stained glass and blazoned holy stories. The Gospel remains the same in whatever light, as regards its substantial grandeur, tenderness and efficacy ; but remember always that the Gospel may be received by a person in two modes : first, by eruption, secondly, by saturation. And when you come to that second mode, these esthetics that I am describing get their chance.

Even preachers may be divided into two great classes, the irruptive and the saturative, the last getting their saturative quality largely by their culture, their tone, their art-quality, their likeness to storied windows and religious architecture and the sanctified compositions of the great tone-masters of the world. Some four years ago, when I delivered a lecture here on our Congregational worship and proposed some enlargement of ritual among us, the late Dr. Bacon, who was present, said that I had been spoiled by my Upjohn Church. Which was only what I am now saying, that the saturative form of impression is one of the forms, and a strong one too. I wish my Upjohn Church had got at me fifty years ago and that my constitutional irruptiveness had had fifty years of chastisement. As it is, I must irrupt, more or less, so long as I live. However I have come at least to recognize the other more silent and gentle process, the process saturative, and to be willing to speak a word to you in its behalf, as I am doing this day. I do not know that I should feel that I had risen to the full size of such an occasion as this if I should spend my whole hour expounding so small a detail in the general subject of beauty and its influence, as a dim religious light ; still I have noticed that an entire large topic is often contained in some single one of its elements, even as a tree is completely discovered in its smallest leaf. Just let a man discuss the storied window question clear to the bottom, and he has broken the back of the whole difficulty in the matter of esthetics and religion. It is frequently taken for granted that these elements of impression for which I plead—the art elements—are not so much elements of impression or use, as elements of fancy, entertainment and enjoyment, and are not worth considering strenuously, on that account. But it is not so. Take that inconsiderable circumstance, the storied or colored window, as an illustration. The light thus secured has the following not at all trivial recommendations.

It sequesters an assembly seven times more than does an untuned

light, that is, it makes them feel that they have left the street, shop and home, the flow of daily and common life, and are now shut in with God and things divine. Next, it immerses them, unperceivedly perhaps, but none the less on that account, in the mysterious ; that feature of religion which saturates the sensibilities as profitably as any other feature, it may be. At any rate no one has taken the full stress of his religion till he has felt the touch of its mystery. Blessed be anything that helps bring that about. Next, so much of dimness as any reasonable interior is likely to have is promotive of mental tranquility ; that one thing most necessary to get, before a man's religious privileges begin to soak in very much. That is physiology in part. The eye here must have repose, the rest of shadow, before the mind can have repose and the mental receptivity thereof. I do not understand however, that this mental advantage of shadow rests wholly on physiology ; I fancy it is an ultimate fact of the human mind that dimness inclines one to meditateness, brooding, sentiment and movements of the soul far-out and away. Behold the genial influences of the night. The numerous staring visibilities of the day are then withdrawn. They no longer occupy the mind. And with that the numerous noises of the day are hushed. And thus released, the intellect no longer operates as simple intellect, but the sensibilities are called in. A man's deeper self and his honester self and his tenderer self and all his better and choicer self comes forward and begins to play. Therefore the night is a rare time for lovers, as has been immemorially understood. And just as rare a time is it for piety to expatiate upon its holy and nourishing themes and search out its waters of comfort. It is a time for reminiscence too ; a time, in fact, for everything sedate and mellow and saturative. So then, a sacred interior that borrows a little of this same night-witchery, has done a good thing. It has prepared an atmosphere, a mental atmosphere, wherein the Gospel can do its very best. For the Gospel has not done its best when it has simply laid down its propositions. Those invulnerable propositions do not more need to be uttered forth in and through a vibratory medium, the air, than they need to go forth through what I will call an esthetic medium, made up of the impalpable influences of softened light, strong and refined architecture, truly religious, chaste and rational decoration and an order and movement of service harmonious with them all.

It may occur to some of you that Christianity is an essentially



cheerful religion, and is imposed upon therefore when domiciled in any the least sombreness, such as dim lights and gothic effects. I think we shall come to the truth in this matter, if we take one look, fair and square, at Him who is Christianity impersonated. God forbid that we should call him uncheerful. But God forbid also that we should call him cheerful in the same sense that birds and squirrels are, or even the ancient Greeks, who have so filled the world with their incomparable happy art. Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; not alone as bowed down under a heavy Mediatorship which reached its climax on Calvary, and then melted away into the flow of a great triumph; but as essentially, constitutionally and forever a chastened person. Go back to that date in the dateless eternity when the triune God alone was, and why was God not even then what for lack of a better word I will call chastened? What should we think of a Being who, standing at that point, contemplating the fact that his own good and blessed nature made it incumbent on him to originate by and by such a universe of contingencies and shadows as this universe of ours, could be otherwise than toned by it? Go forward also to that forthcoming and eventual date when that apostolic word, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound," shall have been completely fulfilled, and the whole groaning and travailing creation shall have been brought out of its pain into the glorious liberty of the children of God; the best time, on the whole, the creation ever saw: and even then there will be something not unlike a minor chord in the universal rejoicing. Even as Hillhouse meant to hint, I suppose, in that hymn of his where he addressed the angels who never fell, and said to them:

Earth has a joy unknown to heaven—  
The new-born peace of sin forgiven.  
Ye, on your harps, must lean to hear  
A secret chord that mine will bear.

That reminiscent element in earth's final joy, the remembrance of sin, will eternally differentiate it from all other joys, and it is impossible not to believe that the enthroned Jesus, gone victoriously to the right hand of God, in his undiminished and unchangeable humanity, will evermore be something other than he would have been, other in his feelings, other in the entire play of his soul, by reason of what he has passed through; and also by reason of the

tremendous fact that in spite of all he has passed through, hell is not yet obliterated from the map of the universe, and if our orthodoxy be true, never will be.

My Brethren, gothic architecture, with its seriousness and grandeur, its sombreness, as some would say, is an inevitable influence from Jesus of Nazareth. The Greek temple is not. The Greek temple is not formulated on a serious back-ground. Greek architecture is not the product of spiritual struggle. Once in a while a Church building committee, caught by its historic renown and deluded by the idea that grave architecture may come to be wearisome if profusely repeated, proceed to set up a Greek form to worship in; just as painters and sculptors sometimes think they have chosen their best possible subject when they have selected some figure or scene from classical mythology and have laid themselves out on that—on some pagan Deity, some Bacchus, some Faun, some Mercury or some Venus. The truth is, we have Bacchuses and Venuses enough of our own, if it is important that art should keep on in that way. But really and soberly, when you come to religion and religious subjects, I humbly venture the remark that Christianity need not knock under to heathenism. We will take what is good, refined and great in the classical civilizations, and make what use of them we can; and we will even borrow ideas from their sacred buildings; but Christianity has developed an architecture of her own; an architecture severely chaste, moral and sublime in its fundamental tone, but quite capable of being warmed and illumined with sober touches of cheerfulness, by various devices not necessary now to specify; touches superimposed on that solid foundation-tone. I do not know anything much simpler than the great cathedral at Cologne, so far as its interior structure is concerned. I shall never quite recover from those unsculptured stone pillars that there bound the nave and stretch away into the upper spaces. The whole moral strength of simple lines is there developed. But there is a great glory of windows in that edifice, that for one thing; and when in 1872 I attended an early morning service there, and the sun in the east inundated all, and especially the sufficiently adorned and beautified choir-space, where the service headed up; I felt that I never saw such a combination and sweet mutual interfusion of sublimity and beauty; the sublimity made mellow and melodious by the beauty, and the beauty made strong, unenervating and moral by the sublimity. I am not here to be fanatical and say that any the

least departure from the gothic type in Church edifices is unpardonable ; but as I am taking time to show how the Beautiful may be let into religion, without letting in softness and debility and ultimate demoralization, to wit, by subordinating it to the supremacy of the true and the ethical, I do like to insist on gravity as an underlying quality of the architecture of the Church—gravity, that great tone which so comes into the gothic, for one. Let gravity be made sure, and certain sane and robust things implied therein ; and the florid, the sensuous, the artistic will not be likely to run away with us.

It is like what I said about the sermon ; make sure of structure ; get into you the true structural spirit, and the decorations will come along inoffensively and in right measure.

## ORDER IN SERMON TOPICS.

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Gentlemen, we learn by the mistakes we make ; that for one way ; but when a man has spent a half century or so making mistakes and getting wise in that expensive manner, he turns to those who are young, with a feeling that they ought to learn by his mistakes and not be at the miserable expense and waste of time of working out a great list of mistakes of their own. Hence this constant procession of lecturers through this desk, men covered all over with the scars of their mistakes and desiring to tell you where each scar came from, and how they might have avoided it as well as not had they only known what they now know. Each lecturer is seized with a deep fear, now and then, that you will all go straight along to make mistakes for yourselves and that nothing short of actual decapitation will stop you ; and yet none the less does the lecturer's heart within him yearn to lecture, I notice, just as though there were some good in it. Well, perhaps there is. If the universal desire of man for immortality rather indicates an actual immortal life, may it not be that this universal instinct to lecture, on the part of gentlemen rich in mistakes, is a hint that men as young as you are benefited by being lectured—one in a dozen of you, at least.

These thoughts, pro and con, came to me as I started out to prepare for your benefit the warning in black and white which lies here before me now. A particular, clear warning which no man happened to deliver to me when I stood where you stand.

My Brethren, on a given Lord's Day, a minister preaches on a certain topic, and on the next Lord's Day on a certain other topic, and the next day on another ; and so on so long as he lives. But what determines the succession of those topics? Do they

cohere by any coherency however attenuated, or do they stand each one in absolute cut-off from everything before and after, like a solitary island in mid-ocean? Probably there is some sort of coherency in the business: so much at least as prevails in a string of beads which, although they are not in a very vital connection and cannot be said to hang together, are at least hung together; as the cord on which they are strung very well knows; but is the preacher's coherency intentional, methodized, bottomed on principle, and therefore persistent and uniform? Probably not. Mine never was. And so far as I could tell, most of the preachers whom I knew were just like me. They had come out of the theological seminary with no thoughts at all on the subject, and they skittered along accordingly. That was a whole generation ago, when things were darker than they are now, and young men had more facilities for not knowing everything than they have at this present time.

I shall distribute the material of what I have to say to you now in regard to the succession of the preacher's topics, most conveniently for myself and most conveniently for you who must listen to me, if I remark; that all conceivable laws for methodizing this succession classify under two heads, first, laws subjective, secondly, laws objective. That considerably threadbare terminology, subjective and objective, is so convenient that one dislikes not to use it occasionally. If it were not convenient it would not be threadbare. Roads that most accommodate the public want are those that have the grass all worn off, of course; and their bareness is their glory.

Let us in beginning consider the subjective laws of before and after in pulpit topics. They are such as the following: First, you may get your themes and the succession of them from the absolutely unregulated impulse of your own individuality. Years ago I was about to marry a certain eminent gentleman whom you all know; and the appointed hour had come and he and I were in a room by ourselves composing our minds for the event, presumably; and presumably rehearsing our parts for the impending ceremony. Not at all, Gentlemen, not at all. He was discoursing to me with all his might on a certain very remote intellectual subject, as though marrying and giving in marriage were already over with and ended for this world, and we were all like the angels. "My friend," said I, interrupting him at last, "do you not wish to know what particular ceremony I am about to use?" "No, Mr. Burton, I am not one of these stereotyped men, you know. Follow



your own genius, and it will be perfectly satisfactory to me." Well, sermonizing may go in that way. The preacher opens to his congregation the special matter that he does open at any given time, because he, the preacher, is exactly the man that he is. If he had happened to be a different man, he would have opened a different subject. That is the whole explanation of what his people get that day. A most precarious state of things, one might say. Being fed by ravens were not more so.

Secondly, a preacher may follow the impellings of the Holy Ghost in his own soul, and may have it for his rule that his theme shall be given him, every time, supernaturally. He refuses themes gotten by study, or human conversation or any sort of public or private hearing or seeing. He has no objection to study or to the voluminous say-so of authors, conversationalists or lecturers; but when he comes to that one and critical act of selecting next Sunday's discourse, he proposes to just empty himself of all mortal accumulations, and take in only sky-born things. A beautiful attitude that. And a fruitful one, too. For the Holy Spirit has no aversion to souls thus heroically made empty. On the contrary, he delights to enter such; and when he is once in, he is delighted to find there, after all, great treasures of honest accumulation; and out of those treasures to pick topics for the man's use and mark them sometimes so that he can know them. Almost all preachers—all real preachers—can tell of experiences they have had in that line. Not more was the stock and stuff of prophecy given to the Hebrew prophets, than the substance of sermons is given of the blessed spirit to men now, over and over. These then are the two, great subjective laws of choice, as regards our subjects. They are chosen in a supreme individualistic impulse, or they are chosen as chosen for us by the Holy Ghost.

And now a word as to the objective laws of choice.

First, the minister may move about much among his people and quietly hunt his themes in their hearts and lives. Being their minister rather than another people's, he naturally wants to preach to their necessities; their necessities are his subjects and his great business is contact with them, with a view to know them and make his discourings touch their case. Now that is pastorly and sweetly Christian in the intent of it: moreover it is oratorical, for the power of oratory lies one-half in adjustment at the moment to the assembly in hand. The abortiveness of misadjusted oratory and

the death-sweat to the speaker himself, if he is sensitive enough to have a death-sweat ever, is often a recollection for a life-time. This pastorly preacher whom I am now describing, not only hunts hearts and lives from house to house and along all the ways of life, with a view to suitable discourses, but he watches from afar and in a general way; peradventure, the public mind of his parish may be moved by a common wave of feeling, by some occurrence of common interest, as a conspicuous and impressive death, or a startling accident or a great crime or a special jubilation or a presidential election or an earthquake or an outrageous heresy or a crusade of the women of the community. Many things happen; and the pulpit can rehearse them, or if it does not exactly rehearse them, it can shape itself to them in the abstract discussions of truth that are full of application to the present situation. Of course, there is no coherency in such subjects as they come on one after another; but then there is no coherency in the successive interesting events wherewith they deal.

To be sure, the sensationalist has his special glee in pulpit topics based on present passing phenomena in this way; but a decenter minister than the sensationalist may also get his topics thus, considerably. On the whole, it does seem rational that a public speaker should indicate somehow that he knows what particular world he is in and what the present, passing circumstances are wherein he stands and speaks. "I speak to posterity," said a certain disgusted member of Congress, when his fellow members did not incline to listen to him; and we are all familiar with Charles Lamb's account of Coleridge's getting him by the button in the Strand, in London, to talk to him at length on a favorite philosophical subject. Lamb says that he took out his knife and cut off that button that the absorbed philosopher held by, and went his way for the day; and at night found Coleridge on the same spot, going on as briskly as ever. Well Brethren, it is not best for preachers to be too much absorbed in present and transient circumstances, but we had better, on the other hand, not preach to posterity alone, nor to the empty air. I can recollect the day when I prided myself that my pulpit interest, for me, was drawn from my subjects, so that in that respect I did not care whether I had many to listen to me or not, or whether my congregation had all cut off their buttons and left. That was going too far—as I think now.

But secondly now still dwelling on topics selected on objective principles ; a minister may take this for his rule ; he will spend half his year, the winter, for example, in sermons directed to revivalistic ends, and the other half of the year in sermons that shall have a wider range and bear on culture and edification. That is a simple path and numbers there be that enter thereat.

Thirdly, we can formulate a complete system of doctrinal topics, and take our people through a wholesome round of theology, year by year ; that for Sunday mornings. Then in the second services we can move more miscellaneously ; making free with all subjects the more freely, because we have piously observed our appointed routine of the morning and given the hearers a sure loaf to masticate : the centre and substance of a full divine meal. That plan has one virtue for certain, namely, it is a plan. It makes a preacher consecutive because doctrines are consecutive ; and it tends to make consecutive Christians in the pews. The people are insensibly methodized under that treatment, and they grow to be knowing and systematic in religious truth.

Again, preachers may follow the recorded career of the Lord in their sermonizing ; or lastly, they may do what comes to much the same thing and take the order of the Christian Year, as laid down in the liturgies of the Church at large. I run over these last specifications rapidly because I shall get back to them again, and to all my specifications, when I turn back in my subject and consider the desirability of these subjective and objective methods. And first, the methods subjective. Let me give them a rapid run through the mill once more and point out some of the chaff and grit in them. Take the doctrine : "Just follow your own genius," as the great doctrine for preachers. No doubt a preacher of that kind will be likely to be full of flavors, to be marrowy and real ; and considered simply as a galvanic battery, he may be first-class. But a personality formulated on the principle of individualism, as his has been, is likely also to be circumscribed, lop-sided and more or less eccentric. A man who has so much respect for his own interiors as to make them the law of his pulpit subjects—the law of their selection and succession—has reached that advanced stage of self-respect by an individualistic course of education as distinguished from a catholic education. That is, in his choice of books, lines of study, methods, teachers and everything else which has gone in to make him what he is, he has supremely followed his own

genius. In preserving his own precious individuality and standing guard against influences that might obliterate or enfeeble it, he has kept out influences that would have universalized him and made him an organ with several hundred pipes, instead of a solitary and eccentric bagpipe. Now a bagpipe in the pulpit tends to make bagpipes all around. I do not know anybody who more needs to be an organ than a preacher of the Gospel. The Gospel is as capable of innumerable tones and tunes as the vast atmosphere is, if only it can have a many-piped man to tone and tune through : a man who is an organ and not a pipe. I do not now dwell on the disadvantage that the preacher himself suffers when he is a pipe. No, what I object to is the multiplication of pipes and pipers among his hearers by his being what he is. They take the fashion of his doctrinalism and his spiritualism and his entire limited culture. As though a deformed man should inflict his type on the whole community. This highly original preacher whom I am deprecating, not only selects his topics and their order by the law of his own originality, but he selects his Scriptural lessons for his pulpit and his hymns by the same law ; and the prayers in which he leads his congregation are simply self-evolutions once more ; they are his experience and his circumscribed religious thinking spoken forth, and the bowed congregation must conform themselves to that unique pattern, or else not pray at all. Usually they do not pray at all, but watch that interesting evolution. The danger is that they will come to like watching it and to supposing that to be prayer, and to feeling that prayers which are catholic rather than individual are tame and formal and maybe not acceptable to God.

I wish I had time to illustrate at large the evil of following your own genius too much. I am afraid you will laugh at me when I tell you that at Easter 1884, in early April, I began to write and preach on the Resurrection of our Lord ; and on that theme and its branches and corollaries staid, steadfast and rooted till the last Sunday in July—four months—averaging more than one sermon a week on it and writing on nothing else. I presume you will charge the bagpipe infirmity on me. I could explain and defend myself partially, at least, but I will not. Rather I prefer to hasten on and say, that I can refer you to scores of important Creeds, Church Creeds, Creeds of theological seminaries and denominational Creeds, in which the Lord's resurrection is not mentioned

at all, and nobody would know from them that he did rise, save by inference or implication. And that although the doctrine of the life of the risen Lord, communicated to dead human souls by the Holy Ghost, to make them alive, is the doctrine pre-eminently that differences Christianity from all other religions. Now is not that playing something less than full organ? Those Creeds are very resounding on the passion of the Lord and on some other themes, but they pitifully die away on that one event which is the forth-flowering of all preceding events. We need a speaking pulpit which is not limited by the private genius of the man in it, a pulpit that discusses topics that any given private genius might forget, or touch too lightly, if he were not made aware of them and attent by the voice of the Holy Catholic Church; the godly wisdom of the whole Kingdom of God; the teaching ages; the Holy Ghost in the ages. The preacher who goes by his own genius, does not much hear this great teaching. He has picked up some things—some great things probably—and on them he puts his whole weight. They suit his mind. He can preach on them *con amore*. On other topics he would be listless. So he abides in these his specialties. I must work the truths that I can work, says he, and what other truths there may be must be worked by men who are born to it, as I certainly am not. And his people, instead of sitting at a full table, sit stintedly at his; and bear the stamp of his specialization. So much for that.

And now, how about getting our sermons by the direct gift of the Holy Ghost? Will that do? Shall I open this particular thought or text to-day, because the Holy Ghost operating in the secrecy of my mind, has authentically designated that subject for this day; and shall I insist on that as the rule of my selection always? No. And why? For various reasons. To begin with, God has confessedly provided various externals for the guidance of men; the Bible, for instance; and human advice, and his providence working on the large theatre of history; and ordinances which are practical digests of information; and the teaching Church. I do not need to name all of them, but if there is only one—just one—the Bible, say—that one is conclusive to the point that God did not intend men should walk by the inner light simply. And I do not know but the same thing is indicated quite as clearly by the fact that men are made of soul and body, and not of soul alone. Why am I clothed upon with this external outfit with



its several outlooking organs, by which I am related to the vast and multifold external and am perpetually externalized—why all this, except as my Creator wanted me to lead a double life, and be doubly directed in all that I do: first, by the blessed Spirit, no doubt; but again, by authorities exterior to myself! Moreover, why is it that, while the operations of the Holy Spirit in souls are certainly favorable to sanity, sweetness and discretion, the forth-puttings of the persons thus operated upon are frequently neither sane, sweet nor discreet—why is this unless God means to notify us that a man must not go by interiors alone? The Apostles and the first disciples were full of the Holy Ghost and of power, even the power of the Holy Ghost, as they needed to be considering the tasks they had on hand; but this fullness of the Spirit did not save them from error always, and was not meant to. They had differences among themselves in respect of the things of the Kingdom, wherein both parties could not be right, although they were re-born of the Holy Ghost. Mary, the blessed Virgin, was much inspired when she improvised the Magnificat; so was Zacharias when he chanted his Benedictus; but both of those God-given hymns are strictly nationalistic rather than universalistic and Christian, and it took quite a long time to get even the Apostles out of a nationalistic conception of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to speak of all this without seeming to disrespect the Spirit of illumination, the light of God in the mind; but we must speak of it, otherwise men all about will be undertaking to go by the Spirit of God and nothing else. Evidently the Spirit does not wish any such thing. He enters them and then yields to their ignorance and persistency and lets them blunder. A ship all sail capsizes. Sails and good gales are good, but ballast is good too. And when God's gales are on us, the gales of his Spirit in the mind, we must steady ourselves by the ballast of authority and by the wisdom of that same Holy Ghost embodied in the Book, in Christian history, and in Christian institutions, notably the Church. The secret of equilibrium lies in a due balance of the outward and the inward.

You see now, my young Brethren, why I cannot advise you to get your sermons from Sunday to Sunday by any merely subjective law of choice. Well then, how shall you get them? They must come somehow, for the Sundays come and the congregations come together. If the ministers were all Joshuas, every now and then

some sore-pressed soul of them would be halting the sun, stopping the Sundays and taking a rest in his subjects ; but the Joshuas are all dead and gone ; and no preacher ever escaped the next Sunday. Brethren, I do not think we need to escape it. Subjects are as numerous as Sundays are. And while I would not lay down a too strict and iron rule for getting subjects, and locating them, one on this Sunday, and the other on that ; I have slowly settled to the idea that, for an outline of our march through the year, nothing is better on the whole, perhaps, than the life of the Lord chronologically followed ; as it is followed, indeed, in the Christian Year laid down by those Christian bodies which give attention to such things. At any rate that may do for one outline. The life of the blessed Lord, I say, beginning with the Advent and ending with the Ascension ; and yet not ending there, for his invisible career is a part of his human career as truly as his birth was. The Man Christ Jesus, that veritable man, in his humanity intact and undiminished, has gone up to the right hand of God, has sent forth thence the Holy Spirit, and now waits till his enemies be made his footstool by that Mighty Spirit ! In even just mentioning this outline for sermonizing, I feel my heart caught in the warmth of it and made glad.

The first advantage secured by such a course of preaching is, that it sweeps the entire circle of Christian truth, and does not leave the minister and his people exposed to the perils of a partial and unbalanced cultivation. A man who had never examined the subject might say, and would be likely to say, that a following of the life of Jesus in our sermonizing must result in less breadth and less variety than some other plans : the plan of a doctrinal curriculum, for instance. Are there not large parts of Holy Writ that do not get treated by us in our pulpits provided we simply run the round of the Christian Year ; such as the civil legislation of Moses, and many a report of battles, and numerous touches of personal portraiture, and a great many religious hymns in the Psalms and elsewhere which have not the remotest reference to Christ ; and any amount of national history too in the Old Testament ? I reply, of course, the Bible in its entirety, and not in selected parts is our text book. We must be careful on that point. The whole educated world has come out of the notion that all parts of the Book are equally profitable to be preached upon, so that a minister must take for his topic Paul sending for his cloak to

Troas, as often as he takes the sending of the Holy Ghost, and so often as he preaches on the cloak must be just as enthusiastic as though the Holy Ghost were his theme. Nevertheless, the whole Bible, cloak and all, is to be turned in and utilized when we speak ; and if it cannot be utilized on the Christian Year plan, then that plan is conclusively exploded. But consider now the following.

A loving student of Christ and his career will find himself carried, by that study, into an amazingly large fraction of this volume :—carried by a movement direct and inevitable. The most unpromising portion in which to find him is the Old Testament, but the moment we accept the Old Testament record as organically one with the new, and admit that the day of the Messiah was preluded and introduced by a gigantic preamble, a long-continued toil of miscellaneous forces which were systematized and made co-efficient by the blessed purpose of God running through the whole thing, and converging the whole to the Advent ; and admit further that the Old Testament is our authentic history of all that ; we have implicitly declared the presence of Jesus in innumerable places in the old record. He was the outcome of the ages and to interpret him we must search those ages. And while we shall find him very obviously manifested in numerous events, personages, institutions, prophecies, and allusions back there, we shall as truly find him in still more places : Psalms, histories, sentences, incidental utterances, and what not, wherein no mortal at the time suspected any other meaning than that meaning constrained by their time and locality. If God chooses to elaborate a terminology full of present significances and then thousands of years thereafter, in the providential unfolding of events, makes that old terminology carry vastly expanded significations, which significations it is now plain enough that terminology was designed to carry, if God pleases to take that way of gradualism, and would not have his Old Testament speak forth all its contents till the fullness of time ; who are we that we should undertake to criticize him ; and why may we not better thank him that we are privileged to explore a Book so germinant and phenomenal ?

And so the New Testament. If Christ and his life is our appointed circle of topics, to be sure we must resort primarily to the histories of him given by the four Evangelists ; but hardly more to them than to the Epistles, those inspired expositions of the very things we are after concerning the Lord. If I am speaking on

the birth of Christ or his circumcision, or his baptism or his temptation or his transfiguration, or his death or his resurrection or his ascension, or on any scene in his life or any slightest word that ever fell from his lips, my experience is that the whole volume begins to swarm about me ; not every passage of the whole, perhaps, but there is such a swarming that I feel as though every and each were swarming, precisely as the Samaritan woman said, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did," because Jesus had told her so much in the few words he did say, that she was sure of his ability to tell more, and felt that already her entire secret consciousness had been opened out. If you press me hard, and ask me at what point in the Christian Year I am accustomed to bring in Paul's cloak, I answer, I bring it in when I bring in the man that wore the cloak. And if you ask me where I bring him in, I answer, I can bring him in wherever his life connects with Christ's life, or even with the Kingdom of Christ. It is not straining matters much if when speaking of Christ, I speak of one of his Apostles, especially such a sizable and interesting Apostle as St. Paul. Moreover, how that little accident of sending for the cloak helps light up the whole early situation, the exact situation wherein both Christ and all his friends found themselves. The truth is, we depend on trivial incidents for a large part of our information whereon to build an historical and realistic conception of the day of Jesus and his co-laborers.

I should say here, that if there are some parts of the Scriptures that cannot be directly connected with a life-long round and round of Christ-sermons, as perhaps there are, those parts can certainly be drawn upon and made of use in the way of illustration and enrichment for the Christ-sermons—and I suppose it was one of the special designs of God in getting the Book written, to have it used in that way. A preacher with eyes on all sides of his mind, may and will use material collected from the whole breadth of created things and human life ; but his pre-eminent storehouse is the Bible. The Bible has more contents than any other book. And it has more of God in it. And it was more intended for moral and religious use therefore and for homiletical material.

I said to you at the beginning that in laying down the circuit of the Christian Year as one of the most serviceable of circuits for the preacher to follow, I did not mean to be more than cast-iron on the subject, and I therefore desire here to slip in the suggestion, that if only we traverse that circuit in one thorough-going discourse

each Sunday, we have fulfilled all righteousness perhaps, and made sure of a roundabout education and indoctrination for our people ; and on the numerous other occasions when we are called to speak, may spread abroad upon such topics as do not come into a following of the life of Jesus—if any such there be. I doubt whether there are. I wish this body of students would appoint a committee to hunt for some and let me have the list they make out and see what I think of it. If I cannot find a scene in the life of Jesus, or some sentence that he spoke, or something else directly connected with him, that will make a natural text whereon to unfold every object on that list of yours, young Gentlemen, then I will give up the case. But supposing I cannot. Suppose there are numbers and numbers of good, preachable subjects that do not easily get into the cycle of the Christian Year. I should say march through the Christian Year, that for one thing ; make sure of that—and then right along parallel to that substantial movement, just march a more miscellaneous and unforeordained movement, skirmish-work, Zouave-fighting, hitting things as they fly : such as the last earthquake, Paul's cloak, politics, dress, the theater, the social evil, Ecclesiasticism, the advantages of celibacy on the part of the more poverty-stricken and roaming of the clergy, anything you please ; only, my Brethren, you will always notice that the Christian Year kind of preachers never want to discourse on equivocal or unpermissible themes. Their constant companionship with the Lord in the round of his life disciplines their taste and sharpens their hunger for themes full of Gospel fatness and gusto, themes that are not scrappy and remote and queer.

At the same time they will not be narrowed and made monotonous by this companionship with the Master, in their prescribed round of discoursings. When Dr. Horace Bushnell had served his people twenty-five years, he preached a sermon to them, afterwards printed, in which he said that some of them had complained that he preached Christ too much and did not range through as large a diversity as a preacher reasonably might. He defended himself a little, but I presume they were right. At least they had an idea which they were feeling after. Never did there live a more versatile man than he, in the constitution of his mind ; he was wonderful in that regard ; but for various reasons, the heavy attacks made upon his orthodoxy among the rest, he had labored supremely upon certain aspects of truth and had partially retired other aspects.



Some subjects he not merely did not discuss, but took no interest in; important subjects, too. Various things that quite fascinated a ritualist, he simply despised as topics for a strong man to consider. The continuing and undiminished manhood of the ascended Lord, he esteemed a small matter, apparently. The various questions that center in the atonement enthused him mightily and pervaded his sermonizing to any extent for a long time; but it would have been better had he widened his sweep by something like this on which I am this day insisting: a selection of his themes of discourse, not by the accident that his theological standing at certain points had been impugned, nor by the accident that he had become a Congregational minister; nor by that primary and fundamental accident, his being born with an Olympian head and with steam on from the first, so that he could create full-veined subjects for himself, as the profuse prairie creates flowers—in no such ways as these could a man like him, or any other man, in truth, be widened to his utmost and made all-including in respect of topics: but rather by some external, authorized curriculum, put upon him as a bondage at first, if need be. It does not hurt these giants to harness them and make their huge strength move along roads that former generations have laid out; it is interesting to see them canter across the open fields and disport themselves in simple exuberance; and it makes the rest of us proud that one of us is thus exuberant and gigantic—but when you come to solid use—or to the greatest solid use—why let us have them harnessed; harnessed into some objective round; the Christian Year, for example, or even into some of the other objective systems which I have named; the yearly course of doctrinal sermonizing for one.

I do not mention Bushnell as a pre-eminent sinner in the respect named, neither have I the heart to emphasize against him anyway. He is only one of hundreds of us. I myself am one of this wicked class naturally. Some subjects I like and some I dislike; and if I do not keep watch, I preach all the time on the former. And I select Scriptures to read to my people that I like, and do not at first see, perhaps, what some parts of the Bible were written for at all. Of course, my pious intention is to preach on everything that deserves it; and to do it proportionately; dwelling on the uplifted Cross more than I do on the Roman soldiers at the foot of it; but I am like the converted Indian who was put to trial before a police court for whipping his wife. "I forgot," said the

poor fellow ; and when I as a preacher come to look back over any year of my preaching, or over a stretch of years, I notice that I "forgot" all along and followed my nature too much, rather than my solemn good principles in the matter.

Many of us are carried away by the special rages of the period in which we live, or of the nation to which we belong, or of our denomination or of the local community where our home is : and we preach more than we ought on those rages : on the rights of man more than on his obligations, (how natural that is in an American !), on individualism more than on solidarity, (how natural that for a Congregationalist !), on Church organization, apostolical succession and the force of sacraments, more than on doctrine and life (how natural that for a ritualist !), on the love of God more than on his holy rigor (how natural that in this day !), on sins against the social state, like theft, lying and adultery, more than on the sins that are purely spiritual and an injury against God.

Now as a corrective of all over-specialization, all disproportion, all narrowness, all provincialism, denominationalism or localism, all private personal impulses, in preaching ; I present the Christian Year and praise it ; and if I cannot have that, then I want some similar thing ; some contrivance which represents, not the extemporaneous wisdom of some single John Smith, however intelligent or inspired, but the aggregate wisdom of all the Smiths ever born, if we can get at it ; a wisdom that is the aggregate of something ; of a synod or a general Conference or a Caucus of Presiding Elders—anything to get ahead of Smith. Not that I would be so uncongregational as to want a bondage provided for Smith, but I would like something set up for him to look at and turn over in his mind, and perchance freely choose ; something portentous enough to make it a conceivable thing that he should choose it and go by it, by and by and when he has looked long enough ; if not implicitly then approximately or by fits and starts ; so that his listening congregation shall notice every now and then that he is in the throes of something foreign to himself—that is, something that he did not altogether originate himself.

Again, if you as a preacher distribute your emphasis upon a large and various list of subjects, as you will if you follow the plan I have been speaking of, you will save yourself and your people from all unwholesome religious excitements. Yes, and from all revivals, some man speaks up and says. Yes sir, that is so ; from

revivals that depend on an exclusive, prolonged, persistent presentation of two or three doctrines. And in my judgment that is not one of the least of the uses of the Christian Year. It does not forestall all fluctuations of feeling. It does not prevent seasons of special feeling, real swells, in fact, as at Advent or Easter-tide or Passion Week or Lent. I do not understand that God wants the fixity of the solid plain in the ongo of the inward life of men, but rather the beautiful mobility of the sea. But the mobile sea needs steadying, somehow, does it not? Mere mobility, mobility unharnessed, mobility uncontrolled by any objectives whatever, that certainly is not best. Standing as I do among a kind of creatures, namely, human creatures, who are three times too dead in spiritual matters, I have never felt called upon to make all the ado I could against what has come to be known as revivalism; but if anybody asks me my cool opinion on the subject—my opinion on the whole—if he will bear with me, I am willing to say that all the revivalism that is really wholesome in the long pull, and will add up large in the day of Judgment, can be secured and naturally is secured in that annual circuit of preaching which I am trying to glorify this day; and that one of the reasons why I glorify that scheme is, that it is sure death to certain styles of revivalism—to those styles, I mean, which are begotten of whole winters of direct bombardment on the consciences of men, in the use of a certain few missiles of terror and the like. Perish the thought that these missiles are in any wise unscriptural, but perish the thought also that these voluminous Scriptures of ours and the truths they contain, enjoy being retired for months at a time, while a limited selection therefrom is made and trundled to the front and opened in a special cannonade.

Years ago, I was calling on the late Rev. Dr. Jonathan Brace and he, happening to be in a reminiscent mood, said to me: "Thirty-seven years ago this very week, Dr. Hawes took me in his carriage, drove me over from Hartford to Litchfield and preached my ordination and installation sermon. It was in the time of the theological controversy over Dr. Bushnell. On the way I said to Dr. Hawes: 'Do you know, Doctor, what Dr. Bushnell says about your preaching?' " "Why no." "He says that you have but three topics, Death, Judgment and Eternity.' Hawes dropped his lines and said solemnly, 'Could a man have three more important topics, Brother Brace?' " Those of you who knew those two eminent men, and how powerfully they were differentiated from each

other, will see the points of relish in that anecdote ; but I introduce it here for the purpose of saying : Three topics are not enough. They may be enough for one day, but they are not enough for three hundred and sixty-five. They are enough to make an excitement with, as one hurricane is enough to tumble up all the waters of the globe ; but the waters of the globe do not need to be tumbled up in that way. There are a good many forces wherewith to operate upon the waters ; forces uneccentric and serene, forces that leave the oceans so that we can navigate them and not be drowned, all of us :—the sweet moral suasion of the moon, and the complex swing of the moving earth. There is no danger of stagnation if the whole roistering brood of hurricanes stay away forever. Let them stay away, I say. Just carefully follow the Lord and have your meditations rise and fall with the fluctuations of his life and teachings, and you will have all the vicissitudes that are good for you. When I come along into the Spring and keep step with the events of Passion Week, I find myself submerged in as much emotionalism as I can comfortably carry. The whole air about me seems to be in a swoon sometimes under the stress and suffusion of the great themes of the season. And I am left in that suffusion just so long as is healthful for me, and then Easter pulls me out of it into another suffusion ; and yet the beauty of it is that that other is not another, as being contradictory to the first, but another as purple is something other than red, being red plus blue. The red is all saved and the blue is super-added. Blessed is that scheme of holy culture in which each stage melts into the next, like a tributary into its river, swallowed up but not lost.

Thus much on the tranquillity breathed into us by the Christian Year. Our whole emphasis is not heaped up on three heads ; whether Death, Judgment and Eternity, or some other equally solemn three. All the mental over-heat ever heard of was caused by inordinate concentration on one or a few thoughts ; and the only remedy for over-heat is counter-irritants or heat started up at other points. Warm a man up on a whole cycle of themes and he will never run wild on one. Wheel him through the Christian Year and he will be sane and peaceful, though not torpid, the whole year through. And what better can you have than that : peaceful but not torpid !

The only other advantage of that scheme of pulpit topics of which I have been speaking, that I will ask you to consider to-day,

is that it will make your preaching concrete and factual, rather than abstract, philosophical and remote from the thinking of the average listener. I think pretty well of a doctrinal syllabus along which to conduct our people year by year, if we cannot have anything better ; as the preachers of the Reformed Dutch Church are ecclesiastically required to get through the Heidelberg Catechism once in so long. But there is something better. It is one of the perils of that plan, the plan doctrinal, that it tends to take the minister off into intellectualizing in philosophical theology ; dropping the personal element, the Lord Jesus, considerably, and losing thus an immense advantage. My Brethren, most of us who are brainy and investigatory, incline to cease from tangibilities and expatiate in the intangible. We like to manipulate propositions better than we like to manipulate things. We are afraid of color and the flash of imagery and the beguilements of physical analogy in our diction. If we could only get a terminology as colorless as that of the algebraist, and swing along in his absolute exactitudes, when we speak, we should be happy. But nobody else would be happy, save some tenth man out in the pew, the algebraist himself perhaps, sitting there to see how near we come to a scientific demonstration in what we say. Is there much passion or much that smacks of the ground in mathematic symbols? No, you will say, neither do those cold terms suggest any living person. They not merely suggest no person, but they do not seem to have been devised or invented by any person, human or other. All such flavors as that are purged out somehow. But preachers want to suggest a person, such should be their wish. They want a vocabulary that is full of the taste of the ground, of affairs, of things, of visibilities, of life. We had better have a fairly spectacular vocabulary, than to pale away into  $x$ ,  $y$ ,  $z$ , and trade in them. Neither do we want the square-cut exactitudes for which those terms stand. Our subjects all widen away into the indefinite and their border-lines are wavering lines—wavering and misty. We are to deal in concretes, to be sure, things that a man can get his grip upon ; but large concretes, so large as to be nebulous on their remote circumference.

Well, how likely is all this to be accomplished on the syllabus principle? An annual course of doctrinalizing? After I had graduated from college, and had gone so far into theology as to intend to study it in a few months and was therefore a rather advanced and capable person as compared to the average of any miscellaneous



congregation, and supposed that I knew a good sermon when I saw it, I chanced to hear a discourse on Election, by one of the ponderous and admirable Princeton Alexanders. It was in a Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey, that I heard it, before the customary congregation of that Church, and on an unspecial Sunday. And it made a dint on me that is a dint on me yet. Not on account of the truth conveyed by it, but rather because of the supreme ability of Dr. Alexander, then manifested, to shy the audience he was addressing and have the subject all to himself. He was clear, O ! yes, he was clear. And he was acute. And there was not an ounce of padding in the whole long discourse. And there was not one person of all his hearers who could have begun to make such a solid, killing essay as that. But the language was sternly intellectual and scientific and purged of all warmth ; an elaboration from out of the cloister and not from out of any place that the mass of his amazed hearers had ever been in. And the thought was closely consecutive. If you stopped to wink you lost something. Everybody seemed to know as much as that. So nobody did wink ; though as I looked about on the faces to see how they were all getting on, I noticed that they seemed to be about where I was ; in a dulled-down and humiliated way, as though they wanted to wink a good deal.

Now no sermon like that was ever preached by a Christian Year man to an ordinary and unselected assembly. His manner of getting his topics has externalized him and dragged him away, diction and all, from scholastic methods of dealing with his congregation. He may be dull enough by force of having been born dull, and limited and sealed up, but so far as his training in topics is concerned, it has tended all to carry him near to the apprehension of the people. I am not getting this point out as I meant to, but it has some value if only it could be got at. I have great respect for intellectually able preachers, powerful theologians, redoubtable essayists, stalwart Alexanders and all the rest. It would be a pitiable thing if the Christian Church did not produce such ; they have their place and function. But preaching is not essaying nor theologizing nor philosophizing, but a dealing with men, women and children, in mass and unassorted, for their salvation. Wherefore, our instrument must be their vernacular for substance, the English language in its most living and picturesque forms ; the English language perpetually freshened by the speaker, in that he uses it

with a thorough-going sense himself of the precise, live contents of its swarming forms, a sense of their radical contents as reaching back to a physical base, a sense of their acquired contents, acquired by ages of use, and a sense of what I will call their homely contents, derived from human life in its homely average.

And our materials of discourse must be not merely real entities ; simple, abstract, thoughts are that : but entities vigorously externalized and made to seem like facts : after the manner of the Bible, which continually clothes the unseen in the drapery of the visible. Hell, for example, is a well-known, deep valley and revolting catch-all, where the fire never goes out. And if Jesus had some spiritual truth to convey, he wrapped it up in a familiar incident or bit of common experience ; or he pointed with his finger to something then and there present. No Alexandrine monograph on election from him ever. Many of his hearers thought he was ridiculously simple, I dare say, or at least did not fathom the profundity of his simplicities—and many of us, when we were younger, have failed in the same way. But now it is coming to us that there is no teacher like him for massiveness and reach ; and that no man, however philosophical, theological, solid and able, need feel himself circumscribed or let down from his intellectual and scholarly dignity, if he formulates the riches of his mind in terms that are concrete and unrarefied earth-growths and growths from daily life.

Now, my dear young Brethren, I have made a long labor, and whether it is a mouse that you have from it all, judge ye. I am certain though that it is something more than a mouse, provided it serves to wake you to the serviceableness of some sort of plan in your preaching ; that, as distinguished from planless on-goings. I have no undue attachment to the scheme I have been eulogizing ; I hope I have not. I like it pretty well, but you can do a good deal with other schemes. My particular enthusiasm is, I say, that you get some objective order by which to march, and be not left a prey to your own spontaneity, or left to skew this way and that by the touch and touch of accident : like a boat adrift on a river, which bumps now one bank and then the other, and gets its devious course in that unbeautiful way. The people in that boat keep moving and see a good deal of landscape first and last ; but it must be a deal confusing to take their landscape thus, at all sorts of obliques ; sometimes head on to it and sometimes backing up.

When they come to make a map of it, by and by, it will puzzle them, I fancy. Of course, when you set yourself to study plans, you will see that there is a choice between them and some of them you will reject. And when you have selected the best one, as nearly as you can get at it, and are fairly in the midst thereof, perhaps you will find it useful to season it with touches of admixture from other plans. When you are in the movement of the Christian Year, should you settle on that, you must not fail to let into yourself the Inner Light, the Holy Ghost: partly because, on almost any Sunday of the Christian Year, any one of several subjects may be germane to that day, and the blessed Spirit may assist you to just the one of the several; and secondly, if the particular subject for the day is given you by your chosen curriculum, the Holy Spirit is infinitely able to warm up your subject for you, as you revolve it in your mind; making it most dear to you and most dear and irresistible among the people.

The two heaviest objections to all this that I have been saying before you to-day, are that an elaborated order, covering the whole year, is fatal to that revivalism which many believe in and love; and that an external order, let down heavy on the preacher, is likely to impair his elasticity and make his sermonizing drudge-work too much: a speaking on this or that because the time has come for the same and not because his mind has happened to kindle to it.

As regards revivalism; let us be left to just those natural and sweet and fruitful vicissitudes which come of a reverent and tender pause, now on the Advent and now on the next eventuality and the next and the next, in the great history of the Redeemer of the world. As regards the damage to one's spontaneity by the superimposition of an order, I observe, first:—

It is found in experience that no such damage is incurred. In that thoroughly detailed system for getting through the year which is presented to us in the liturgies, for example, of the liturgical denominations when any Christian season arrives—as Advent, say—there is provided, among other things, a pertinent selection of Scriptural Lessons to be read and thought about: and what sort of a mind must a preacher have if, with the solar thought of the Incarnation before him and with the Advent Scriptures, than which nothing was ever more lyrical and contagious, pouring themselves into him, he cannot raise a free flow and settle to his theme with delight? A man who, thus stimulated, feels himself bonded, is

not fit to be a preacher of the Gospel at all. You need not tie yourself to the particular round of Scripture Lessons provided in the liturgies, but you had better tie yourself to some provided round and not make your own selections always in the interest of spontaneity. An individual selection, extemporized from Sunday to Sunday, is always a partial one. Only a selection deliberately marked out by the Church, or by the general sense of some representative body, is likely to compass all Holy Writ evenly and so furnish an even culture to all concerned. As a matter of fact, I repeat, a curriculum does not destroy spontaneity. On the other hand, it immensely increases it. Each Sunday, in the annual specified circle of Sundays, presents numerous points of stimulation to the mind and calls the mind out and makes it sing in its theme. I have heard very able ministers of my own denomination say that the most wearisome and distasteful of all their mental work was the work of choosing topics whereon to preach. They were at liberty, ordinarily, to preach on any one of ten thousand ; and that was the trouble. It would be a mercy to them, in the dubiousness of this unbounded range of theirs, to nail them right down, even to Paul's cloak. That would be a challenge. And instead of consuming their vigor in a vagabond movement through all topics to get the right one, they would instantly set themselves to direct, resolute digging on the cloak ; and something would have to come. Concentration is wholesome. Each summer, when my vacation draws nigh, I am distracted, I notice, by the great numbers of summer resorts to which I may go ; but on that particular summer when I am compelled to use my vacation for the production of one to a dozen lectures wherewith to torment you the following winter, I am much less distracted. I select, of necessity, some place in the country on the railway, not far from my study in Hartford, not far from that familiar desk and chair wherein my poor old mind feels most at home.

Me this unchartered freedom tires

said William Wordsworth. There is no liberty worth anything which is not a liberty under law. "Thy statutes have been my songs," said the Psalmist. Which goes to show that objective law may be transformed into spontaneity. Statutes into songs ! The prescriptions of the Christian Year into a furtherance to the preacher's mind. Statutes into songs. I do not know that the Psalmist

could have bettered that if he had spent years upon it. I do not believe he knew how good it was. In that sentence of his he inadvertently plumped out the innermost feature of the Christian life ; namely, the law of God as a restraint or bondage, utterly dissolved away in the free flow of a delighted obedience.



## ASSIMILATION OF SERMON MATERIAL.

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Gentlemen, most of you feel your own limitations, I dare say. If you do not, I feel them for you. So do your professors. But I am willing to believe that you feel them yourselves ; your limitations of character and your limitations of intellect. In other words the grace of God has not finished with you yet. Neither have your teachers and the various other forces of tuition. And in your present circumscribed and half-and-half stage of development, you have times of looking forward to the forth-coming days of your service as Christian ministers, and saying, "who is sufficient for these things, who has character enough, who has brain enough, and who, in fact, has a sufficient body for a really victorious handling of all the great works and tasks that seem to belong to our calling."

On the great question of sufficient bodies I will not dwell. My private opinion is that bodies are useful and had better be kept up. Indeed in the last analysis, success in ministerial service is a question of bodies. With no body at all, that is, if a man is a ghost pure and simple, no church wants him. For various reasons they do not. But supposing he has a body ; but a very attenuated, undigesting, shattered and inefficient body ; a body that has no voice, no push, no courage, no ability to sleep nights and all that : why, that man's church calls will be few and ought to be. So then, dear Brethren, I should lecture on your bodies, and warn you and exhort you and tell you my experience and point to illustrious examples. But I pass it all, as I shall also the exceeding great question of sufficient character for good service in the ministry. I think character is more possible to be had than intellect. There is less of it in the world, but that is not because it cannot be had. Every man can

be good ; ever so good ; good enough, as you may say ; so good in fact, that his parishioners will hardly care to have him improved ; but not every man can be very bright and very massive, weighty and awe-inspiring, in his mind.

And another thing, your goodness, when you get to be ministers, can be used every day among your people and not grow stale ; that is, if you are honest, truthful and pious to-day, and then to-morrow are honest, truthful and pious over again, and so on, putting forth the self-same qualities, honesty, truthfulness and piety the whole year through, nobody wants you to change, because you have been at that so long and have grown so reiterate in it. No, you are just as relishable the thousandth time that you are honest, truthful and pious, or the ten-thousandth, as you were the first time. Whereas, on the contrary, if you promulge the same idea every day in the year, or the same set of ideas, you grow tame, and the parish gets tired, and you must say something different ; and right there comes the pull on your mind, and you need a good deal of mind, the more the better ; an unlimited mind almost you begin to feel.

So, although character is indispensable, yet, since by the good grace of God it is so feasible, and when you get it, is not staled by every day wear, so that it is not necessary to start out into something brand-new in order to keep your people interested, I will pass on to consider the much more distressing question of your intellect :—that instrument whereby you satisfy the terrific clamor of your congregation for ideas ; new ideas ; ideas that you never put forth before, exactly or ideas, at any rate, so costumed, decorated and disguised, that your hearer will have a feeling that he has fallen on something original ; the same old Gospel perhaps, but the old Gospel so freshly expressed as not to be a whit threadbare.

I would not ridicule this craving for freshness, neither would I intimate that the craving cannot be gratified. I think it can. Any old truth, re-lived on the spot by the man who speaks it, seems original always and goes out with authority. Or put it in this way ; whoso utters that which is given him to utter by the Holy Ghost operating in him then and there as he speaks, makes an effect on his listening congregation precisely as real news would, notwithstanding the news he tells is simply the exceedingly old and very oft-told tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ. There is something very dear and encouraging to ministers in that curious fact.

I will pass, I said, to the question of your intellect and how you

shall handle it to make the most of it, in both size and productivity, so that your congregation shall never be worn out under your preaching.

Two years ago, when I was speaking in this place, I said in a certain lecture : where do our thoughts come from ? when a preacher originates his own thoughts, where do they come from ; and when he gets them somewhere else, where may that elsewhere be ? And I went on to try to answer these questions, saying for substance, that our thoughts come from our interiors and from the manifold endless exteriors whereby we are surrounded ; not as though the thoughts of interior origin are not made up largely of external material, for they certainly are ; but in those thoughts that are distinctively mind-born and interior mind-born and interior as contrasted with thoughts sense-born and exterior, the exterior material has been so digested and assimilated and made the man's own, that he is not in the least conscious of exteriors, but seems to himself to be originating absolutely. So then, although at first it seems superficial and inexact to speak of two sources of thought, namely : the mind itself and the world of outside material, nevertheless, so far as our own consciousness reports on the matter, that distinction is exact. We do consciously, that is, taking consciousness as our text, originate many ideas, whereas many other ideas that we have and put forth we consciously do not originate, we being at the time aware that they come from beyond our own minds ; they are external things ; we are in debt for them to books, men, nature and God. If I had not already spoken here at good length on ideas subjectively originated—in the sense now explained—I should want to do it to-day. But I must not repeat, (you may repeat honesty, truthfulness and piety, but not ideas,) and I have more than enough to do in discoursing on Materials external, and the way we must use them, love them and beware of them.

Well then, I am going to speak from this time forth until the hour ends, on Mental Assimilation, bearing down all the while on externals, even as in that former lecture I bore down on internals.

You have noticed, I take it, that some preachers are very subjective in their discourses, dealing a great deal with Mental processes, discussing what that Mental movement and state called faith, precisely and consciously is and what repentance is and how it feels and how it gets started in a man, and wherein it is distinguishable from numerous other things that look and feel in us a good deal like it,

and what "full assurance of faith" is, and what remorse is and how conscience in us can be known from other attributes, and how conscience works under either one of a hundred different sets of circumstances; and in the complicated mental process of turning to God, what and how many separate elements can be traced by a long-headed, acuminated analysis of the matter. Subjective preaching, I say—mental philosophizing in the pulpit—sharp, detailed, hound-like, endless, able, amazing, philosophizing—you have seen some of it and heard of a great deal more, for it is a kind of utterance that was more prevalent in the old times than now but it still lives; in some strength, here and there, and although it is highly respectable in its intellectual aspects and although a certain strong cultus may be built on it, yet on the whole there is a better way for preachers than the subjective way. A better way.

The subjective method breeds an over-self-inspecting and anxious piety. A man led by his minister to concentrate on his own interiors, must be anxious. What is there there that has any particular cheer in it! At first sight one's own self is depressing enough to him, but when that first sight is carried on into a minute, indefinite, mental and spiritual self-analysis, the thing gets worse and worse and no good and sweet peace is possible under such a regimen as that.

Moreover, a preacher very prone to subjectivity, and therefore not cordially prone to externals and intellectual incomes from that quarter, gradually formulates for himself a narrow individuality—of course he does—the only way to expand and multifold one's self, is to get out of one's self and take note of other individualities, and hear what they have to say; giving our own say-so the advantage of rectification by theirs; but this preacher of whom I am speaking, is averse to all that; introspection is his forte and delight, and so far as expansion is possible by introspection, he expands, but by that alone, for these subjective persons are not unlikely to be earnest and persevering, and what individuality they have is as strenuous and resolute as you please. But I say again and must insist on it, they are narrow—they are strong theologians as likely as not—they know precisely what they believe and why they believe it, and why you and I ought to believe it, and why we are distinctly less than first-class persons, if we do not so believe; and they are formidable champions to deal with in a theological wrestling match; however they are narrow and a considerable part of their strength comes from

their narrowness, from the concentration of narrowness, from the ignorance of narrowness, just as when you look at a picture through two tubes, so that you can see nothing in the wide creation but the picture, it immensely brightens your sense of the picture.

And being circumscribed themselves, their preaching tends to circumscribe those who listen to them ; and circumscribed individualities thus get multiplied and theology becomes stationary in those congregations, as theology ought, no doubt, in its gist, substance and core, but as theology ought not as respects the way men grasp, handle, express and apply that substance and core. Think of evolving your theology from your own consciousness and from the materials of your own experience, and making it thus of just your own size and no more ; when thousands of first-class men in all ages have been laboring in that field and have reported their labors, and when theology, as it now stands, is the result of a long historic process organically unfolded under the ever-present and orderly-moving influence of the Holy Ghost, more or less ! Think of the implied egotism and practical impudence of such a proceeding ! It is only implied ordinarily, I am happy to say. The men are not conscious of what they are doing. But if they just would consent to make one trip beyond their private and interior selves, to see the size of the creation, and count up the host of other thinkers abroad upon the face of the Earth and back in Christian history, they would be conscious of their egotism, and of their disrespect to a great company of exceedingly bright and honest souls.

There are other evils of this thing which I have found it convenient to call subjectivity, but I must hasten along with you.

I have prepared the way now to deal directly with the external materials of thought—the thousand elements that our minds are privileged to take in, grind down, vitally transmute, assimilate and make sermons of.

First of all, how are we to get hold of all that external stock and stuff ? Not by being intellectual hermits, building our cabins in the little sequestered nook of our own consciousness and having a quiet, happy, self-conceited time all to ourselves. That will not do, as we have just seen. No, we must go forth among men and multiply to the uttermost our points of contact with human life and thought.

Specifically, we must take advantage of wide conversation on every subject of human interest, not omitting all possible converse



with common people, for there is scarcely a man anywhere in these parts, however illiterate and unthoughtful, who is totally devoid of "views," (as they are called) and stubborn views at that ; views that he will fight and die for, if you would have him ; views that he has assimilated somehow and made to be the pith, push and throb of his personality ; and then underneath his views, lies that great human nature that all men have ; a very respectable and even august and pathetic thing ; get yourself into conversable terms with that, O preacher ; listen to what he has to say ; try your theology on it, and see that nature squirm as likely as not and express itself and fly at you ; and thus illuminate both the excellencies and the defects of your theology, more than a course of lectures could, perchance. And while you converse with all sorts of persons, do it genially, receptively ; not as perpetually shocked by many things that you hear ; nonsensical things, infidel things, malignant things, shocking things—supposing they are shocking, you are around after ideas, not to be horrified and paralyzed ; this is God's world after all and truth is God's truth, and He has everything firmly in hand, and you are permitted to share His tranquillity in the midst of errors and terrors and about all that is believed, said and done, here and everywhere. Move about. Get around. Travel your parish. Do not be one of those much-cursed and much-despised "literary fellows," whereof we have heard in these times from the many lips of the Philistines ; recluse thinkers, unpractical men, do not be of that sort. Meet everybody whom you can ; and when you meet him assimilate him and make sermons of him—as I heard Mr. Beecher say at a dinner of mutton, "the next time that sheep bleats, it will be in a pulpit."

Again, I insist that you attend the regular and irregular and never-ending meetings of the Clergy and of the Churches ; the Associations, Conferences, Synods, Conventions, Congresses, Clubs and all the gregarious manifestations of religious, ecclesiastical and theological men and women. I say attend all, that is, attend habitually and numerously. Attend the stated and organic convocations of the Christian body to which you belong, always—make that your rule—and then, as to the assemblies of Sister bodies, attend often enough at least to show that you are a light-seeking and promiscuous person. The American Tract Society has always circulated tracts against what it calls "promiscuous dancing," but never a tract against promiscuous Christian fellowship and comparison of views. Your brethren of other communions can teach you many things.

So can the elect and expert, assembled brethren of your own Communion; the ministers gathered in council to anatomize some young pulpit candidate; the Church Congress, where the wolf is very particular not to lie down with the kid, but to stand up and debate with the same and keep on loving him all the while—the district meeting for spiritual commingling and for the discussion of practical methods—my experience of the modifying power of all these things on one's thinking, to say nothing of their several other forms of power and of the love-feast aspect of them, leads me to speak very favorably of them to you who are on your way to the time when you will be preachers, and when, therefore, all grists that can be induced to come to your mill will be valuable to you. I even like to see Christian ministers dropping in to "Nineteenth Century Clubs," as Dr. McCosh and others did the other day in New York. There the steadfast old gentleman sat to hear what Infidelity had to say for itself, and decide within his own mind anew, whether or not to give Christianity up. Being a Scotchman and a doughty one, he did not give it up, and went away from the discussion still a Christian; but not the same Christian that he was when he went in. He had more light; more light on the impregnable solidity of the Christian system; more notion how to put truth to the minds of men in these days; more sense of the way Calvinism is unrelishable to the natural man; more per-fervid determination to cry aloud and spare not on the eternal truths.

Again, you will find much in books to put into your hopper as sermon-makers. The first of books is the Bible. More grists are for you there than in any other one place—or any ten places. I do not say that because it is the proper thing and necessary to make this lecture of mine acceptable at this particular point, but because I have myself discovered it to be so. I shall be referring to the Bible again in a few moments and therefore shall not say about it now so much as I might. But note this one thing: that if you have a habit of going to this Book to see what it teaches, rather than to see how copiously it supports and can be made to support your own theological and other prepossessions, preconceptions, prejudices, then continually you will find yourself inclined to read numerous human books that try to expound the Bible and that take up single Bible themes and expand them into whole volumes;—and even those Books that do not seem to you scripturally founded, you will look into. In short, you will be a multifarious reader and

your sermon-stuff will come from God's enemies, not as frequently as from God's friends may be, but almost so.

I do not suppose it is our bounden duty always, when we approach the Bible, to unload all our life-long precious prepossessions and read as though no point of truth had ever been settled and as though it were impossible to conceive what the Book, which we are now reading, is likely to say to us on this or that or the other point. We go to the Bible for a good many purposes and at any given time we approach it in a state of feeling accordant with the specific purpose that we then happen to have in mind ; but I claim that one state of mind in which we ought to approach the Bible, is absolute teachableness and hunger for light. Absolute teachableness implies that we have discharged from our mind all bias, all prejudgment, all previous knowledge, as the basis of opinion. You are not in a state of perfect docility if you are full of opinions already, no matter how rational and biblical those opinions may be. Well, perfect docility in the presence of this teaching Bible makes you want to know exactly what the Bible teaches, if you go to it with a confirmed conscious prepossession that it teaches this and that, you are not in a state of inquiry as to what it teaches ; but if you are docile, you are in such a state, and if so, then it is inevitable that you take counsel of your fellow men, the theologians and others, who have studied the Bible and have written out in books what they have found there. That is my idea. And I should advise a wide reading habit. Read the writers with whom you agree, if you want to, but just as much, perhaps, read those who you think have gone off from exact foundations, if only they are honest and really have ideas. They are as able as anybody to stock your mind and make you a productive sermonizer.

The external materials of thought are inexhaustible and preachers are entitled to them all. History furnishes material ; philosophy furnishes some ; science some ; poetry some ; all the multiplying ologies some ; civil affairs contribute ; everything contributes ; even the humble minutiae of daily life are very filling to the right kind of a mind and may be worked over into sermon form—the thinker is a universal devourer, or may be, not for purposes of gluttony, but for purposes of self-nutrition, and ultimately for the nutrition of others.

But let me come a little nearer now to this subject of nutrition—mental nutrition—the thing that the fecundity of preachers depends on so much.

These externals whereon I have been remarking, these materials for the omnivorous mind you may possess yourself of in two ways—two and no more, so far as I now see—you may have them memoritively, or you may have them assimilatively ; in addition to that, you may have them in both ways at once. Quite as often as any way, however, the strongly memoriter men are not very assimilative, and on the other hand you may see prodigious assimilators, men chock-full of the all-about plunderings they have made, who, nevertheless, cannot remember much of anything, especially in detail. If they had no way of accumulation but the memoriter way, their emptiness would be pitiful and practically embarrassing both to them and to us.

But they have another way. A man has not lost his food because it has disappeared from his stomach ; neither has he lost the mental food which he has gathered in, because it has disappeared from his memory. The food disappeared from the stomach because it would go more fully and really into the man's possession, being vitally distributed to the different parts of his system, and in the distribution being made over from merely material and dead atoms, into vital atoms ; atoms not unworthy of a resurrection to eternal vitality, when the Lord shall come. The difference between memorized mental material and assimilated mental material, begins now to come out.

The disadvantages of the memorized sort are more than you would think at first.

Memoriter possessions you may lose. Most of them you must lose. And you may lose all of them some day. To recover them again, possibly, in the resurrection state, but for the present we are incessantly dropping our memorized accumulations. The Rev. Sam Jones in one of his peculiar sermons recently, spoke of a feeble little Mississippi steamboat so weak in her steam appliances that whenever she whistled it stopped her engine ; and similarly, the limited memory of man is not strong enough to take in a new thought without letting out some old one, once laboriously taken in. A most miserable and ridiculous faculty in that one aspect of it. How fast does a man get rich and powerful in his mind by that process of taking and dropping, like the mill-mind hopper ? How much does he grow ? How long would it take to make an able-bodied thinker of him, a man of real weight and respectability ; a powerful preacher, for example, provided this curious faculty of his,

his memory, threw overboard every day exactly so much of her cargo as would balance what she that day took in. Providentially the memory does not do that exactly, but on the contrary, retains more or less of the old when new materials are shipped—after all though, this being unable to whistle without stopping your engine, this constant losing from recollection more or less, while you are at work to acquire, makes one ask as I did, how long it would take to make a person full-grown and sufficient, if his mental possessions were all of that fugitive memoriter sort. And how many men, and even ministers we have seen who are scarcely larger at fifty, in the great particulars of intellectual manhood, than they were when they left the theological seminary ; because they have, for the most part, led a memoriter life. They have read enough and been told enough to amount to something, but as the hopper grows no richer for the grist that is in it, and therefore after ten thousand bushels have been thrown in has not advanced in the least beyond its original hopper state, and would not have advanced if the whole ten thousand bushels had stayed in it forever ; so the memorizing men, however repeatedly they have taken in the grists of the mind, and even if they are endowed with those phenomenal memories that hold on to grists like a resurrection memory, do not grow very perceptively greater, do not weigh in a conflict, do not preach ponderously, do not get home on anybody with any special efficacy—with any efficacy, I mean, corresponding to their years and their privileges and their unlimited consumption of excellent outward material. Sir William Hamilton in his lectures on Metaphysics, while discussing the memory and telling what it has been able sometimes to do, mentions a young Italian who could have thirty-six thousand words read to him hap-hazard out of a dictionary, just once, and then could start off and repeat the thirty-six thousand in the precise order in which he heard them, and could turn the list end for end and repeat it backward ; and could recite the list skipping every other word and could do all these things after a year or two had passed away ; and I do not now remember what else he could do—and do not want to remember—the thing is frightful enough already. But did you ever hear of that man among the really great men of history ? Did those thirty-six thousand words prove to be of the nature of an increase to that miserable young fellow in any respect ? Sir Isaac Newton and Lord Bacon, Shakespeare and Milton, Homer and Plato, Daniel Webster, William Gladstone and President Porter, could not all put



together recollect a thousand words ; so the Italian was at least thirty-six times the man that they would be if all rolled into one corporeal unit, or would have been they twenty-five times over, provided that the gigantic accumulator in his constitution had been able to assimilate the materials of all sorts which it was able to take in. But, so far as heard from, it was more retentive than assimilative ; and the Italian stands forever a solemn sermon to the world on the comparative uselessness of unassimilated possessions. There he is, a plethoric nobody and a warning.

That distinguished Englishman, William Carpenter, I recollect, in his work on Mental physiology, also gives some striking illustrations of the insufficiency of mere memorizing to increase a man's size, weight or quality ; or more particularly, he enforces by numbers of anecdotes the idea that strictly memoriter acquisitions, or things gained by "cramming," as a collegian would say, do not stay by one very long. In they come and out they go and the man is a simple sluiceway, except that of course some small amount of material sticks to the sides of the sluice and stays—to no good purpose however, as it is not taken into the man's circulation, but only sticks.

Now, Brethren, I have brought you to a day of judgment and I want you to decide whether you will be memorizers or assimilators. If you are good memorizers, your people, as you preach and talk to them, will get a good deal from you no doubt. Perhaps you can stand up before them and run off thirty-six thousand words as straight as a string. But I want to mention to you some of the drawbacks in that kind of preaching. I have more than hinted some of them already, but the subject is not used up.

First, if you get your homiletical materials by cramming, using a great deal of memory and not much of anything else, your personal increase will be likely to be small—I have said that once and now I say it again, your personal increase will be small. It is a pity to spend several days making a sermon, and then to take aim and fire it, while you remain as empty as a fired gun, when you might fire your whole charge and yet retain the whole charge for your private use ever after ; retain it as completely as though you had not fired at all. If only your ammunition were assimilated ammunition, firing would not decrease it, any more than pumping exhausts a living spring. Pump away, the spring knows where to get more. Preach away too, you are just as rich. Is not that worth knowing, for a man who may want to preach forty years in the same pulpit.

Secondly, preaching in the use of memoriter materials does not bring much gusto to the preacher himself. What is the gusto of a sluiceway as compared, for instance, to the gusto of a growing plant? Or make this comparison. A plant stands in the ground and takes up the mold and rejects the dead grit, and takes the rain and the dew and the air and the sun, and secretly makes them all over into just what it wants—namely, into life and living forms, with a murmur of inward joy the while, that anybody can hear and share who has the ears for it; and then right along side of the plant, stands a stake driven down for some purpose; and what does the stake do? Does it sing at its work? No, it is doing no work. It has nothing to sing about. It just stands there a mere stick; good to hitch too perhaps—a sound and safe stick, and therefore respectable—but a stick. Live things are liable to eccentricities in their growing and forth-pushing; sticks are not; but which of the two is the happier, in all likelihood, the live things or the sticks? So the preachers. He who speaks from out of the vital stores of his mind and nature, has his own private glow and gladness always; enough to pay him well for his work, salary or no salary.

Thirdly, since memoriter material lumbering a minister's mind and preached at stated times does not make much heat and vital joy in him, it does not over-much do it for his hearers. What is preached out of the memory, is apt to be received only into the memory. How can an unvital man vitalize other men? The idea is absurd. He may instruct them. He may drill them. He may exercise their patience. But as respects vitalization he is a failure. And after all, my brethren, vitalization is the greatest work of preachers. I had rather be alive with little information, than dead with tons of it. I had rather hear a preacher of limited contents, so that his contents have been turned into life and personal force, than to hear a man whose contents run up to thirty-six thousand, but are in him simply as stored in a warehouse. It is sometimes debated whether preaching will not die out before long, because books and periodicals are so multiplied. When you can get as good a sermon as was ever written, in printed form, for five cents, why go to the church, spend a hundred dollars a year for a seat and consume an hour each Sunday, to hear the local minister, a limited man and not a natural orator, preach a much poorer sermon? How are you going to answer that? By saying that the risen Jesus formally appointed preaching. But he appointed it for some substantial

reason ; and what is that reason? There are numbers of answers to that ; but the one that I want to bring out at present, is this : that while the contents of a book, or that five cent sermon, coolly read in the quiet of one's home, may be powerful and useful, the self-same contents, or even much lesser contents, may be still more stimulative and useful, if taken into a vital mind and there transmuted in the mysterious processes of life into personal substance and fervor, and then preached. I think we preachers will have to surrender to books and periodicals, if we intend to go by memory and mechanical public rehearsals of what we have read. Of course the Holy Spirit could use any sort of a preacher to secure effects ; but according to all observation thus far, he will not. The Holy Spirit is a reasonable Spirit. It respects certain well-known laws ; and if it uses a certain man or preacher, it is able to explain why it uses him.

Well, dear brethren and gentlemen, I must have some words with you now on a matter that, I presume, you have been wondering I did not come to before ; on the question, namely ; how this famous business of assimilation is to be accomplished. Is there any recipe for it that a reasonable man and even a young man can comprehend and put to practical use. Are not assimilators born, not made ; or if they are not made, can a person make himself to be an assimilator, otherwise than by many years of effort, experimentation, fumbling and mistakes? If it takes nearly the whole life-time of a minister to fashion himself into this so desirable thing, had he not better give up before he begins and lay out what strength is natural to him in some other direction.

I propose to answer that. It does not take long for our bodies to begin to assimilate. It is a success from the start. And things vegetable make a success of it. A live slip set into the ground is as cunning in the matter as is an old wise tree. Assimilation is deeply mysterious, but it is feasible ; and a man does not need to be old, nor to be a philosopher to do it. So much encouragement as that we have, on the very face of the subject. Mr. Drummond has written an ingenious book on "Natural Laws in the Spiritual World," and I fancy that if our bodies can assimilate and do it instinctively and commence so soon as they are born, then our minds—and all minds—can do it ; and can begin pretty early, and that they will do a large part of their assimilation instinctively, if we give them a good chance.

I do not claim that a man can sit himself down and say to his

mind—"go to now, do you just assimilate"—and then have that mind march right off and do his bidding. No, he must get at it in ways different from that.

I will not spend any time on it, but I am compelled to say that highly assimilative minds, as a general rule, are not found in unasimilative bodies. It is a mortifying fact, but a literal, that your physical nutritive processes are the foundation of your mental nutritive. An imperfectly nourished brain does not receive impressions absorptively. A brain not supported by a rousing stomach, doth not drink up all kinds of mental aliment, like a sponge. Make a note of that and act accordingly. Even the memory fails if physical nutrition fails. I have had some experience of that myself, at times.

But let us lift out of physicals and note the following things. I hardly know where to strike in, but perhaps a thing as fundamental as any to be said, is, that time is an indispensable element in assimilation. Time ! The one vice of "cramming,"—the reason that cramming never made a scholar—is that the deposits made in the mind are made to be used right off, used and discharged. A vice of some preachers is, that they cram for the Sunday immediately before them, amassing great store of material, but not giving their minds the time necessary to grind, vitalize and appropriate it. The question of time in physical assimilation was looked into long ago. A good many years back, a certain Alexis St. Martin, (if that was his name,) had the covering of his stomach shot away and there was a life-long healed opening there, so that the doctors for the first time in the history of the world could leisurely enter a live man with their interesting experiments. And they went in. They dropped in all kinds of food at the end of strings and then through the opening they watched how matters went on ; how long it took to get digestion along to this, that and the other stage ; how much longer it took some foods to get on than it did others and how some substances never got on. It was a wonderfully edifying opportunity. But whatever they dropped in, took time, they found, and could not be much hurried. They could cram the man and then beg him to get the cram worked over by the next Sunday, but the man could not. Nature was too strong for him. Nature knew that she was entitled to just so much time, carefully measured out, and she took it, Sunday or no Sunday, and would make no haste.

Well, minds know the same thing. If you read largely for an

immediate purpose—your next sermon for example—your intellect, (or to speak more profoundly, your nature,) has no opportunity to do that brooding which it dearly enjoys, that it surely will do when permitted ; and that it must do if it is going to make itself fat out of that reading. And just here I mention it as a curious fact, that this brooding business done by your mind, when it gets a chance, is not a volitional effort, as a rule ; you do not do the brooding, your mind does it ; you go off about your business, perhaps, you give scarcely a thought to that inwardly deposited material, you are too much occupied ; but all the while your mind is manipulating that mass, that intellectual stock, brooding it, fructifying it, coaxing it to be vital, sucking it up into its own circulation by a thousand capillaries, raising it from the memorized matter to matter assimilated and organized ; a very amazing operation ; amazing and inscrutable. I like to dwell on it ; it is so subtle, so effectual and so useful. I recollect telling you here once, in some connection which I have now forgotten, that many times when I have been shut up to just Saturday morning for the writing of my Sunday's sermon I have made special effort to select my topic for that sermon, Friday evening—sometimes on my bed in the few moments before I went to sleep—because I knew by long experience that if the topic was only lodged in me, my mind during all my hours of unconsciousness, would be turning it over and in the morning when I woke I should certainly find my sermon well on its way. How often that has happened to me.

But, to come back to my thought. Assimilation requires time. Therefore, you must read a great deal and take in materials also from other sources than books, (and the sources are numerous) ; you must gather in much, not in view of a near day when you will use those accumulations, but in view of the welfare of your mind for all time ; and you should even ingather often for no purpose whatever, but only for enjoyment at the moment. You may read much poetry in that way ; and there are kinds of poetry that do not give you anything, unless they are read in that way. Those kinds were produced in the meditative and leisurely mental moods of the author ; and they speak only to corresponding moods in the reader.

Or take that bewitching American man, John Burroughs ; when he goes abroad upon the face of Nature, his travel does not simmer down to the strenuous and fierce questions, which is the shortest road between two given points ; and which is the swiftest



conveyance from place to place, or how soon can I pick up the stuff for an essay. Not so. He idles along, with hardly any conscious intention ; knowing that any spot in the whole open world where he may happen to find himself at any given moment, is inexhaustively rich in almost every element that can nourish and fascinate the mind of man. Therefore his contact with Nature is eminently rewarding. She saturates him. He gives her time to saturate him. He sits down in her bounties and beauties chin-deep and soaks. He lets time-measures go. He knows nothing but Now. Practically he is in Eternity. At any rate, he has passed beyond dates and periods, and engagements and beginnings and endings and responsibilities and the importance of making haste to get his mind where it can repeat thirty-six thousand words ; and there is nothing left of the universe but first, Burroughs ; second, Now and third, the flower at his feet, the insect humming in his ear, the soft wind on his cheek, the grass, the talk of some near bird ; the dear natural things.

Now it is wholesome to read such books as his. They are the outcome of a peculiarly assimilative mind. They are leisurely and they require leisureliness. No matter about next Sunday. No matter whether his book will work into sermons or not. It infallibly will, but if you read it as intending that it shall, you have fallen totally out of relations to that book and Burroughs can do little for you. What you want is to cease from intentions, especially from immediate intentions, and thus secure leisureliness and absorption.

It is implied in this absorptive or assimilative reading, that your mind at the time is in a state of more or less energy. Absolute torpidity and snoring over a book ; suspends all capillary action of the mind, or at least retards it, and it is as though you were not reading. However, it is not necessary in the particular kind of reading that I am now trying to describe, that you be in any formal effort over it. No ; please loaf through the book. The mind that wrote it loafed ; now do you loaf. Only please keep awake while you loaf.

But there is a little different kind of reading, of which I wish to speak. It is assimilative reading, too ; and assimilative partly because it lets in the element of time. In the reading last mentioned, you are receptive, in the main, but in this kind you are more affirmative. You actively inquire. You take time to do it. You say, is this author's position sound ? Is he exactly fair towards

opponents? Is he exact in his facts? How do his notions harmonize with the great immutable points of religion? There are fifty questions you can ask—and if you ask them it will slow your movement and make you ruminative; and possibly some single statement of your author will lead you into a whole day's rumination. You are not consciously amassing stock for sermons. You are not cramming to meet some engagement. You are simply not letting that man sluiceway through you his ideas and propositions, and leave nothing behind for your enrichment. However, you are not specifically resolved to assimilate. The word assimilation does not enter your head. All the assimilation you accomplish is incidental and unwitting. All that you know yourself to be doing is, drifting along those pages considerately; sifting, questioning, judging. But sifting, questioning and judging, carry assimilation in them. They give the lengthened and drawn out time requisite for assimilation. The mind can not assimilate by a simple touch-and-go contact with anything. Newspaper reading is the greatest touch-and-go movement in these days. And it breeds a touch-and-go habit, which is apt to be carried into all other reading. It may almost be doubted whether the exceedingly increased reading-habit of the public, in these latter times, has made the intellectual fatness and personal weight of each reader more than the fatness and weight of his less bookish grandfather. It seems like another aggravated case of sluiceway. I often think of it when I read the statistics of books drawn from circulating libraries and find that seventy-five per cent and over of the drawings are novels; and also, when I recollect various young persons of my acquaintance who, each Saturday, take from the public library, one, two and three books, to read over Sunday. If a person does that last, you may know two things; first that his books are slosh; and secondly, that if they are accidentally not slosh on any given Sunday, he will make slosh of them, so far as his own mental increase is concerned, by the unruminative way in which he reads them, coursing through on a run, so as to be sure to be ready for two or three more books by the next Sunday surely.

I say then, in order to assimilation by reading in order that you may be more plump, full of color and puissant when you end a book than when you began it, you must either read it in the leisureliness and tranquillity of simple enjoyment—as I explained a little back—or in the determined, robust use of your several faculties of analysis, comparison, reflection and judgment; all this being

carefully unpractical to this extent and in this sense ; that you are not consciously getting ready for anything—as next Sunday's sermon, for example—but are doing the work for its own dear sake. The moment you let next Sunday into the business, that particular, low-class performance known as “cramming” is apt to begin ; that operation which is infested by these two vices ; that it is too predominantly memoriter, and that the necessary time-element is eliminated.

You will understand, brethren, that I dwell on books simply as one of the external sources of intellectual supply. There are numbers of others, but the principles that should govern us in availing ourselves of them, are the same as those just mentioned, with regard to remunerative contact with books. We must give our minds time. We must discharge ourselves from immediate intentions a good deal. We must resolutely inquire, sift, judge and slowly chew our cud. To be sure, our people are waiting for our last cud, so that we are tempted to feel that we cannot chew it, but must lump it right out on to them and then run for another ; still a preacher's salvation as a man good for fifty years in the same pulpit, depends on his putting himself under a rather iron rule, that his very last cuds positively shall not be used, but only those that having been a good while in his system, are no longer cuds at all, but fat, muscle, bone, marrow, pluck and fire. That is what cuds are for. A sermon of cuds is profoundly inadmissible. A sermon of materials that used to be cuds, is all right. More than once in the course of my life, I have had young ministers, yet in the first years of their service, ask me whether they should sermonize from the level of their general information and power, or should get largely above themselves each Sunday, by force of a specific exaggerated preparation for that Sunday ; and always, by God's help, I have had strength to say, just what I have said to you, to wit :—no cramming—as a rule, no cramming—you can prepare enough without slipping into that vice which we so call.

There are several qualifying remarks which I would like to introduce here, but I must take a final movement now to observe that some materials are more assimilable than others. The plant rejects grit and takes up mold. Animal digestion also is very particular about what it undertakes to dissolve and put to vital use. And the mind is full of a similar fastidiousness, or spirit of discrimination. The thirty-six thousand words of that young man, or a table

of logarithms, or the thin and pompous little homily of the Rev. Mr. Chadband, when he gets on to his saintly and feeble legs, are not so nourishing as a great poem, or a passage out of human life, or a judicious selection from Holy Writ. And when I commenced this lecture I meant to point out what it is precisely that makes one food assimilable by the mind and another not—but no matter; we all know an assimilable food when we begin to chew on it—if it is gravel we find it out and if it is real meat we find that out. I would not slander even gravel. It may be good for exercise and for mental discipline in mathematics. Moreover, men of phenomenal digestion can eat it. Hens eat gravel; and must have it I am told, if they are to keep up their usefulness. Speaking of those thirty-six thousand words, I suppose Professor Whitney would not ask anything better than to be turned loose among them to spend his eternity. But most of us are like the Italian, to whom they were gravel. Of course, to some minds, pretty much everything is gravel; but the general run of us have our good foods, which we know as the ox knows his master's crib. Good foods—good foods! Very good!

But perhaps the word most worth saying here and at last, is, that the best food in the world for assimilative purposes is the Bible, Put that in your pocket to make an essay on—the Bible as a food—not a guide, not a treasury of important information, not an arsenal for fighting men to draw on; but a food to make men thick-set, strong, healthy, sizable and handsome. Some eminent ministers have been described as, "Men of one book." Well, supposing their one book had been the New York Sunday Tribune, or Tupper's poems, (good as they be), or Edwards on the Will, (powerful as it is), or the Algebra of Professor Loomis; or any one of the now numerous solid books put forth by the fertile Faculty of this great University. Would those eminent ministers who spent their lives in the Bible and felt their enthusiasm grow to the very last and came to be admired for their stature, sap, leafage and heaven-like bountifulness, have achieved all that on any conceivable book save The Book—do you think—even although multitudes of men's books are books Bible-born? Now why is this? In that essay that you write, just dig that out.

It is thought by some that if they can explode Christianity, they will have exploded the Book that enshrines it and reduced it to the level of other interesting old volumes. On that I should say, they surely will have exploded the main strength of the Book; but

I fancy it would survive and forever transcend all other productions on account of the immense human elements that are packed into it, to say naught of anything else. The elements of human life as it is—the universal human elements—the elements fitted to carry it home to the business and bosoms of the entire human family, notwithstanding that family are dispersed abroad in dissimilar tribes, nations, races and individuals. I wrote a sermon the other day on Rebecca and Isaac, confining myself to the simple old story of how Isaac got Rebecca—and I could hardly live through it, the whole thing was so fresh, dewy, self-evident and sufficing ; so heart-to-heart with all hearts that know what a heart is. And all through the Bible you find quantities and quantities of the same sort of thing—that something or other which makes the Book the spokesman of the human family ; the interpreter of the soul of man, man's congenial other self, the Book that finds him, warms him, strengthens him, goes into his circulation and makes his blood red, virile and copious. I feel often that I would go on taking texts from the Bible, carrying the Bible around in my pocket, putting it in my trunk when I travel, handing it to the bride for a present, reciting it to the sick, reading it at the burial and getting its sentences immortal sculptured over the dead, even if Infidelity succeeded in large measure in reducing its supernatural contents. Anyway and always, it is the best thing we have ; the best Book to feed on—the only Book that a man can exclusively live on and yet be broad, deep, high, manifold and very great.



## VERACITY IN MINISTERS.

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The subject that I desire to unfold before you to-day is the rather important one of Veracity in Ministers.

I wondered at first whether I would not say in veracity, but after a minute, I saw—or thought I saw—that you might see or might think you saw a sly flicker of suggestion in that to the effect that ministers are in veracious sometimes; and I did not wish to begin with even hinting such a thing. Doubtless they are so, some of them; doubtless all of them have their temptations to be in veracious; and doubtless the best man may lose his footing for an instant, and speak or act in a manner that does not bear looking at afterwards: we are all human, I suppose; but the clerical class, taken as a body, are among the most honest of men, they being almost simple sometimes, so that lay-folk take advantage of them. Not only do they keep out of jail pretty unanimously, not only do they get themselves up to the conventional standard of veracity, the standard that will answer for lawyers and merchants and society people, but they valiantly wax honest a shade beyond that, and speak and act considerably as though they felt they might die before night. That is the kind of persons, on the whole, that they are.

They have some special advantages for being honest.

The vocation which they have selected takes them necessarily out of the companionship of the dishonest classes and sets them in a good moral atmosphere, where they certainly ought to behave. To be sure they mingle with the dishonest, but it is as having a moral mission to them and not as comrades and affiliated souls. Pitch never sticks to any one who goes right in that way. Again, ministers as having an assured social position, do not need to practice the numerous small insincerities and time-servings which many

do practice in order to secure a desirable standing. That is a blessed let-off.

Also, they are quite looked up to as authorities ; and where a man's dictum has that advantage, he may put it out frankly and not turn and squirm, and dispense an hypocritical palaver in order to make himself acceptable.

Also they are not men hired by the day, and liable, therefore, to be dismissed if they happen to speak forth some unpleasant truth.

Also, by moving around among men and women a good deal, and lending a hand in innumerable social assemblies, they come to a social poise and tact which saves them from being surprised into swarms of little lies, that are popped out by way of recovery from emergencies. If a lady of great blandishments and great nerve forces them into a sudden corner, instead of lying to get out of it as millions of bashful and unpracticed souls would and could hardly help doing, they, these ministers, are apt to have the self-command to parry and eel their way out ; and if things grow really desperate, they have the vigor and the character to just settle into a silence which, while it is very good-natured and gentlemanly, is also very baffling to the enemy. This is a small matter to discourse upon, but I have myself been saved from so many falsehoods in precisely that way, that I quite dote on it, and like to mention it as one of the felicities of the clerical situation.

And there are others, I suppose. But ministers have their disadvantages, too. There are a good many reasons why they should not be perfectly truthful—a good many forms in which they can lie if they want to. And some of the forms are so subtle as to be hardly perceptible, while some are so plausible and wholesome-looking, that the most pious preacher might be taken in by them.

In the first place a man's energetic desire to do good and save souls may induce him to resort to the following devices :

He may use exaggerated language. No matter about the language, he says, if I can only get God's very truth into these sleepy souls. I must exaggerate, otherwise I shall not get any hold at all.

Or he may cater to his hearers' prejudices by lines of argument, illustrations, quotations, and numerous contrivances of speech, that he does not himself quite believe in and enjoy ;—for if this hearer is stirred up and made to bristle, if he is not stroked the way of his fur, all communication with him is cut off. What is the use of preaching then ? You can not save his soul ! Did not Jesus him-

self, and his Apostles, put in reasonings on their assemblies that were not absolute, but were the nonsense of the people themselves, taken for granted for the moment and for a purpose. It was an oratorical adjustment to the case in hand. If the Jews believed that insanity and so forth were the result of demonization, why might not the great Teacher speak of it in that way ;—not as affirming demoniacal possessions, but as manipulating a people who did affirm such things. You see how cleverly a preacher may salve his conscience with the doctrine that the end justifies the means ; especially when the means are nothing worse than an argument not so faultlessly excellent and irresistible as the hearer thinks it to be.

Again, there is nothing more melting to a congregation, and more likely to get their souls clear open, to what their minister may say for their good, than to notice that he has a thorough-going interest in them—not in them as a multitude or mass, but in them as individuals ; so that he cannot refrain from shaking hands with them often, looking into their eyes, asking about each member of their families, weeping with them when they are in trouble, and putting forth all sorts of emotional concentration upon them one by one, week in and week out. This is natural and beautiful and there is nothing to be said against it. But do you not see what a temptation the minister is under to furnish precisely the thing his people want, and in quantities to suit the purchaser ! Perhaps this man was not born very emotional. Perhaps he was born well enough, but has been cooled off since he was born by a long-continued devotion to study, to things intellectual rather than affectional, so that now he is more brainy than hearty. A good many things are supposable, but no matter about supposables ;—here is this daily call for pastoral effusiveness. And for effusiveness in the pulpit, too. He must preach tenderly, yearningly and all that. He must have a tone in his voice that can reach clear to the place of tears on occasion. I say must ; not as meaning that he absolutely must, but that he had better. And there he is. He can heroically refuse to go any further than he can in this business, and thus save his own soul ; or he can overdraw his reservoirs to save their souls. And all that I have to say about it is, that he is invited to be inveroacious by an invitation about as seductive as a man ever gets. If he succumbs, he becomes “professional” as it is called :—professional !—a terrible word that ought to make a minister squirm as if the shirt of Nessus were on him.

Again, a preacher is continually invited to be more orthodox than he may happen at heart to be. All the world over, conformity is a fine advantage to any man. Where there is a state Church, as in England, and Russia and in Italy in the old times, conformity is the one balm of life. If you take into account both the other world and this, conformity to God is the best thing ; but if you leave out the world to come, and consider the one matter of comfortable circumstances in this present Kingdom on Earth, there is nothing equal to conformity to the reigning religion. Conform or die, was the racy alternative they used to put to people. Afterwards, that was mitigated, and took this shape ; conform or die socially and politically, and in respect of facilities for getting your daily bread. At present the pressure of the most advanced parts of Christendom upon the more laggard parts and even upon such as China, Madagascar and the "unspeakable Turk," is so severe, that what is called "religious liberty," is enjoyed almost everywhere. Still, some remainders or semblances of rigor, left over from the grim long-ago, are to be discovered anywhere you please to look. This country is as tolerant of dissent as any, I presume ; but even here I should rather be a Congregational minister than some others I might name. In Philadelphia there are well on towards a hundred Presbyterian Churches I am told—almost more than is really necessary, a Congregationalist might be mean enough to say—but what I will say is, that in that city it were perceptibly better to be a Presbyterian minister than a Unitarian. You would get more invitations out—more appointments on important public committees, (those small exaltations that keep a man advised of his own importance) ; more furtherance all around in any enterprise you might start. The kind of invitation out that Roger Williams had when he tried to stay in Massachusetts, that Unitarian man would miss in these improved and clement times ; but almost as totally might he miss the whole miscellany of agreeable invitations—just as one of those hundred Presbyterian ministers would miss a good deal probably, if he should undertake to set up in Salt Lake City. More than a generation ago, Dr. Horace Bushnell—if I may mention him once more, as having known him and his case so well—was a more than suspected man, as regards his conformity to Congregational or even evangelical standards ; and that dispute cost Bushnell a world of trouble. It did not unhorse him, because he was an athletic rider and had a good horse under him, in his faithful North Church of Hartford—

then, too, he had an unweariable pugnacity of his own that kept him from being too humble under attack, to say nothing of the good conscience and the love of truth that were in him, but the ado over him was a noisy and distressing one—bad enough at all events to show how important a reasonable amount of reputation for orthodoxy is. If the pressure on a man towards orthodoxy took the form only of a single, belligerent, heavy attack, one square fight might and main and then over with, it were not so bad ; but frequently it is not an open war at all, but simply an impalpable something or other in the air, a something that keeps on year after year, and in the which the poor man breathes. It does not exactly kill him—he almost wishes it would, but it does not ;—it merely takes the caloric out of him, slowly and effectually, and makes life something less than life ; just as when you go into those great art galleries in Rome, in the winter, where no fire has been since the morning of the creation ; at first you are entirely comfortable, but by and by you begin to notice that a process of devitalization has set in. It does not amount to anything on your entrance, and you have no idea of leaving the gallery on account of it. You are not really uncomfortable, you say, but you wish there was a fire. Ah ! well, you are a slightly-scuttled ship, and you will disappear. So is it I fear as regards that imperceptible mist of distrust which envelopes a minister who is a little strange doctrinally. This air is good enough, he says at first, courageously—pretty fair—I can stand it if they can. But in the course of years he discovers that they can furnish more cold mist than he can breathe with any comfort. So you see the strain on him to conform may be just awful at last, and as likely as not he starts out to overhaul his opinions, peradventure he can reformulate them in a manner to have them sound like the good old traditional truth divine.

And while he is in this business of revision, he is curiously helped to make it thorough by numbers of weighty arguments, among which this stands out as large as any ; that if the people to whom he preaches are the least bit shaken in their opinion touching his soundness, his ability to benefit them by anything he says, however true, is impaired, if not ended. That Greek there in their pulpit they fear, even when he brings presents. Therefore he must just stop being a Greek, as fast as he can.

Again, piety is of much value to a minister. A little piety even, goes a great way—and a great deal goes still further. There-



fore he must furnish it. And the temptation is to furnish more than he has. And that is in veracity in one of its inoffensive forms. I call it inoffensive with reference simply to the fact that the man's motive for being more pious than he is, is the glory of God through the salvation of the souls committed to his care. He cannot bear to have his people no more pious than he may happen to be. What a low piece of business it were for a minister to make himself the standard for his people. In his sermons he always says : "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." There is no implication in such utterance that the man who speaks it forth is perfect. That were an absurd idea. No ; he is simply holding up that measure of character which is authoritatively given him to hold up. Well, if he preaches beyond himself in that manner, why may he not act beyond himself, and take on just that holy tone that he knows to be so impressive upon the children of men.

My Brethren, I am showing you, or giving you a picture of the Devil weaving his nets, because I remember what Solomon said—"Surely, in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." My dear young birds, there is one of Satan's nets for you in plain sight. He will want to persuade you to be pious beyond the facts. He will never spur you to be pious in more than seeming, that were to build up the Kingdom that he hates—but he will edge you along to be hypocrites if he can.

And here is another net. Often you as a minister may feel that certain views held from of old in the religious community, ought to be modified. They are too stringent. Those views have respect perhaps to the manner of keeping Sunday, or to the precise kind or amount of infallibility there is in the Bible, or to the question of the punishments of God ; but you sincerely fear that if the community begin to relax from the old-fashioned rigor, they will relax for good and all before long ; and you cannot have that. So you wink at their present ignorance and let them stay ignorant. You do not dare do otherwise. You do not exactly advocate these ideas of theirs, but you somehow manage to let the people go on supposing that you think as they do on these matters. You say—"The truth is not to be told at all times," and other old saws of prudence and sanctified common-sense you hunt up, and calm your mind with them.

Or it may be that the public mind is not so affirmative as it ought to be on some point. Men have come to have sleazy

notions about penalty and hell, about the propitiatory element in the work of Christ, about the moral and doctrinal authority of the Church, about the over-observance of holy days, about owning slaves, and speculating, and divorcing, and leaving their prayer-meeting to go to the ballot, and raffling to support the Gospel. It is interesting to look back and also look around and see how good people have grown bewildered occasionally and doubtful, on pretty plain things, and have given Satan the benefit of the doubt. Well, the minister thinks that men and women in these confusions, cannot be jerked out of them by a sudden application of stark force. No, you must toll them out. You must lay down a long line of corn—corn that they like—even as partridges in the woods are beguiled into snares;—all they see is kernels of grain, strung out and they follow on. In other words, you must rather pare down, or razee the truth, and deal it out simply as they are able to bear it. There is quite a good deal of this done in Christian pulpits. And it is so easy to slip into it.

I have now mentioned some of the advantages and some of the disadvantages of the minister in the matter of veracity. And I hope I have taken you along far enough to make the situation seem an anxious one. It is an anxious one. The ordinary and average honesty is not enough for a minister. Of course he is not going to tell lies, nor steal, nor forge, nor murder. Crimes like those end him—and he knows they do—and therefore he is not going to commit them, even if he wants to (which he ordinarily does not). But simple seemliness and straight walking is only the shell of honesty, and this man of God is not a man of God, unless he can show truth in his inward parts. So then let me undertake a little close remark.

I define veracity to be a supreme intention to see and describe things as they are. A supreme intention to see and describe things as they are! Many see pretty well, who are slippery when they come to tell about it, whether by word or act. On the other hand, many tell well—that is, what they see they report straightforwardly—but then their seeing is poor. That though may be an intellectual fault. The poor seer may get to heaven; the poor teller never will. And it is these poor tellers that I am after mainly to-day. Stupid ministers are one thing; dishonest are another. The stupid ones we can get along with (we have to, at any rate) but the dishonest are different. Permit me to give you a rapid list of

hindrances to exact seeing, and describing. In all seeing there are two factors:—the seer and the thing seen. But let us look at the seer and the hindrances to exactness that lie in him.

First.—He may be a constitutionally gushing seer. Did you never know such? They suffuse the whole creation with their own rosiness, and report the creation accordingly.

On the other hand a man may be a cold seer, by nature, and the creation that he reports is by no means the same creation that the gusher has just reported. But the thing that interests me, as set to unfold my subject, is that neither of them reports the actual creation. There is a chronic inexactness in the statements of such people, which you must always figure on and remorselessly eliminate, before you can really know anything from what they say.

Again, the present transient mood of a seer is likely to qualify his perception and make it inaccurate, and that inaccuracy must be discounted in the report he brings of the object he has observed. One morning in December, 1869, I mounted a hack with the driver thereof and drove from Naples to Pompeii—my first visit to that fascinating place—and my last. But the day was cold. It had snowed. The streets of the disentombed city were white a little. The dust flew too, on the road out, March fashion. I was physically miserable. Therefore Pompeii is substantially a blank in my memory. It is pitiable that a supreme thing can be made to be nothing by some grumpiness in this vile tabernacle that we have on us for a time; for an uncomfortable man is always a misreporter. But if only we are comfortable what may we not see? We can even see things that are not. What the Baths of Caracalla in Rome amount to in fact, I do not know; but one sunny and warm day in late March, I, with a friend, climbed to the top of that great structure, and there, reclined and buried in the green growths on the roof, I dreamed and absorbed and blossomed for hours, thinking such reminiscent thoughts and luxuriating in such imaginings as a man of some sensibility might, with the historic city not far away, and with his own mortal body in a state of perfect warmth and perfect repose and contentment—in a state of prolonged purring, to express it so. So now that building and that day are not blanks in my mind. I could make a sumptuous report of them.

Not always though do our moods come from our bodies. A man's view of a good cause may be qualified and made a practical

lie, by some irritation he has had sometime in connection with that cause, or with some one engaged in its advocacy.

A man's view of the fitness of a certain person for a certain office, may be quite wrong (though honestly wrong) because that candidate has happened to cross him in some respect.

Our moods are numerous and spring from diverse sources, but a mood is as much a mischief-maker, in the matter of true seeing, as color-blindness is, or purblindness.

Again, the philosophers tell us, when they discuss the relativity of knowledge, that all things show themselves to the human eye, not in their total reality, but in so much of their reality as the human eye is constitutionally able to get hold of. And when they say this, sometimes they say it with a general look on their faces and a suggestiveness in the tones of their voice, which is equivalent to an additional piece of information to the effect that what we see when we look at an object, is to the realities stowed away and hidden in that object—hidden forever very likely, from us—as one leaf is to all the leaves of the leafy world. There we are again! Accepting the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, what a baby report any report we make is! The fault is not in the object but in the observer. The object stands there in its absolute bareness, offering itself to be looked at through and through, but it sarcastically suggests that it cannot furnish eyes and object both.

But even where we are able to get into the interiors of the object considerably, and see it in several aspects rather than in one, we, for the time being, are not at the right point of observation for all that many-faced seeing as likely as not, and cannot be; and on that account, any report we make must be inadequate, and in that sense inaccurate. This remark applies especially to our contemplation of religious truth. In the New Testament there are many references to the resurrection of man, and the subsequent resurrection state. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, makes quite an effort to flood that subject with light by his reasonings and analogies. Also by his touches of exultation as he moves along, he reveals the dimensions of the resurrection fact quite as much as he does by anything he directly says about it. He, as an inspired man, sees something that we do not, and by the glow on his face and his joyful gesticulations, we are made to know how this thing is no small affair. So then, we have a doctrine to the resurrection. We talk about it, we preach it, we put it into our creeds. But a

very powerful sort of relativity of human knowledge comes in here. It is not permanently in, but it is in for the present. So long as we stay on the earth, the earth is our view-point in respect of the resurrection. But the view of the resurrection from here, compares with the view of it which we shall have after the resurrection is past, or after we have gone around to the other side, as our view of a cloud when under it compares with our view when some balloon has taken us up and around, on to the sky-side of that cloud. A man looking up at a cloud takes his oath that it is dark and dismal ; a man looking down on a cloud swears that it is one of the brightest and most beautiful things he ever saw.

So much for the power of standpoint, as determinative of perception, and of the reports founded upon perception.

And this thing that I have called standpoint so often as any way runs into and becomes identical with that thing that I have called mood ; a person's mood at the moment of observation.

I recollect that when our war of the rebellion was on, twenty or more years ago, the strong cursing in the book of the Psalms seemed to all loyal people to be dealt out about right,—none too hot. In peace, such talk sounds severe. Our first feeling is, that David and the others permitted their emotions to speak up more than was necessary. But when our Southern brethren began to shoot us, and we were as indignant as ever was David, we saw the Psalms more as they are. Our changed mood was an advantage to us as interpreters.

So when the Spirit of God steals into the heart of one of our circle of unchristian children, and converts him, leaving the rest, the doctrine of election seems a more real thing than it did when we heard it abstractly discussed and proven by our minister. Speaking of election, we should say about it now what we should not have said, save for that thunder out of a clear sky, that conversion in our family.

In like manner the right of a minister to take part in politics—a right which we never denied, I will suppose—seemed not at all what it used to, the moment he in the fervor of an election, when we were more moved in our minds than we ever were before, actually took part—an influential part—and worst of all, took part on the side opposite to us. In our abstract and judicial mood of mind, taking part was one thing, in our political mood of mind it suddenly became another.



Now Brethren, I have made a display of these incertitudes in seeing things and reporting on them, in order that you may discover what a fiery trial of our honesty we are all in, in this present world. The unprincipled man lets these numberless forces shoulder him about as they please, and he sees things pretty much as he happens to, and when he comes to describe them he is equally loose. And the principled man, oftentimes, is not principled enough to resist this confused stress of forces ; especially as half of them are particularly obscure. These thousand-and-one subjective moods that determine our perception of this and that, are very often unconscious moods, like a vessel headed straight towards port, with all sails set, and a comfortable assurance in her own mind that she is making the port ; when, in fact, a secret ocean current is carrying her leagues and leagues away.

Now, a minister, of all men, is under moral engagement and obligation to see well and tell a straight story.

First, to see well.—To see well ! I rather think that, ordinarily, when we speak of veracity, we do not get back so far as that. Veracity is reporting a thing as we see it, and that fulfills all righteousness, most persons would say. But it does not. We are as much bound to see things as they are, as we are to report them as we see them. That is the starting point of veracity ; to see them as they are. Right there, at the root, that moral quality, honesty, begins to come in. I have expounded the difficulty there—the complicated and awful difficulty—but no matter, God entangles us in difficulties on purpose to find whether we have the integrity to get through them. The integrity ; not the perspicacity except as integrity makes perspicacity. No doubt our difficulties develop our intellects, and that is one of God's ends in letting difficulties try to snarl us. He wants us to be bright. But still more and mainly, he wants us to be honest. So he tempts us. He shows up before us all sorts of objects, in bewildering phases. They are bewildering in themselves, those objects are ; and they are bewildering because our moods and our constitutional idiosyncrasies do, unbeknown to ourselves, drift us this way and that, and make us like astronomers studying the sky through their telescope from the rolling deck of a ship. I think it was Samuel Johnson—the great Samuel—who said that if a child of his, looking through the window, remarked that there were four objects out there, when in fact there were but three, he would whip the child ; so important to any good

development did he judge accurate observation to be. To say four even, when there are three, is a demoralization as distinct as to forge a complete lie, and say there are none. But perhaps the observer was simply mistaken, you reply. He had no right to be mistaken. He was careless as to whether he was mistaken or no ; and with only that carelessness to stand on, he proceeded to make an affirmation outright and definite. There is a play of moral quality through the whole business.

Here is a minister. He is preaching a good many things. Most of them he has examined to the full extent of his faculty and his opportunity. But some of them he has not, (I will suppose) ; still, they are conventionally considered parts or items in a roundabout and full-toned orthodoxy. Therefore he preaches them. Like the child looking out of the window, he says four, at a venture. Four is what he is expected to say, and he says it. I will not condemn that minister as a lost soul because he has so done ; but he has tampered with himself in a manner all the more perilous, in that it requires a little push of analysis and acumen to get at and spot its essential turpitude. Or if that is too strong, then say (more mildly) that his underpinning of character would be less worm-eaten if he stopped doing such things. Perhaps that is no milder. Perhaps a worm in an underpinning is as dangerous as a worm in a living root. Most of the demoralizations of men, if searched out, would be found to have their beginning in some sub-conscious, imperceptible minute defect like that.

I have now spent all the time I can conveniently spare on that primary and foundation matter, seeing well, seeing exactly, seeing a thing as it is ;—for I have yet to deal with veracity in the use of language. Veracity in the use of language ! That to which the term veracity is generally supposed to apply, particularly and principally. A man who makes a good honest start at that radical point, seeing ; is just the man who wants the language he uses in giving an account of his seeing to correspond to the facts ; close-fit—not a grain overdone, not a grain underdone. There is no intellectual joy like the joy of that close-fit, but the moral joy of it to a moral man is still greater. That absolute rhetorical veracity exhilarates like a play of electric currents through one's bulk and being. Often, when after labor or by a stroke of spontaneity I have wedded word to fact, in a match of one to the other as complete, self-evident and triumphant as though one had been eternally

predestinated for the other, every faculty in me has shouted for the moment ;—it is so satisfactory to have exactly the right thing done, and to have the rightness stand out incontestible. I think that the way in which the human mind coins words for its thoughts and perceptions, in a steady, copious run of coinage, without the least premeditation or conscious anxiety (more often than any way, and always if inspired and vital) is one of the most marvellous of things ; and indeed no mean image, but a finite duplicate rather of the creative fertility of Almighty God. As his great energies teem and teem and never tire, so do we his creatures teem ; word after word, pat and full, exact and well-rounded, the words fitting the thoughts to the last touch of fitness and the thoughts filling the words to the last touch of fullness.

Veracity in the use of language, shows itself in such particulars as the following :

First,—In a burning desire to get at the exact meaning of a word before we consent to use it. It is easy enough to heedlessly pour out words, flood-like and incontinent ; but this is an irresponsible and immoral procedure. Words were not made to toss about carelessly any more than dynamite is. When an honest man speaks, he pledges his honor to the validity of the meanings which he puts into his expressions ; and he feels that he does, as truly as he pledges himself when he signs a note. I want to tell you of a little fraud that I committed—only some two years ago too, when I was old enough to know better and should have supposed myself man enough not to have done such a deed. God found me out in it though, and I do not intend to do so any more. I was delivering a course of Old Testament historical lectures Sunday evenings, and was on the career of David. And having come along so far as the death of Saul and Jonathan, I wanted to turn to a particular good use among the people, David's beautiful song of lamentations over those two, beginning :—"The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places"—but my good use could be best secured by accepting the old-fashioned interpretation of that composition at a certain point, although I knew that said interpretation had been attacked by scholars and considerably demolished ; nevertheless I put on an honest face and turned in on my confiding hearers that old-fashioned view ; muddling my conscience with the convenient off-hand thought that the authorities were not agreed on the point in question. But providentially, off in one of the pews there sat a

hard-headed strong man from another parish, who of late had been minutely digging out that whole history, and he mentioned to one of my parishioners this performance of mine. That parishioner knew he was mistaken of course, and told him so. His trust in my ability and scholarship and other things, was sufficient to enable him to take a stout stand against him, and in favor of me. However, he wrote me a note about it, and then I wrote him a note, telling him that the man was right, that he had the weight of authority on his side. You see I had fallen, but I got up quick ; so soon as I was caught, at any rate. Well, in relating this incident, I have opened quite a swarm of questions. For instance, the recent revisers of the Bible have witched with numbers of our old passages that we have had the joy of quoting all our lives. Some passages they have caused to disappear entirely. Others they have left in, but not till after such an overhauling of their primeval supposed sense, that one feels like a criminal if he stands to that primeval sense, uses it in preaching, and says nothing. Is it as honest as a minister of the gospel should be, to be reading from his pulpit an old version whose little infirmities here and there have been so exposed ?

And this brings up the whole subject of Biblical quotation. How far may we use texts and passages rhetorically, rather than exactly. Does the Bible like to be dragged in to assist oratory in that way ; even though it be sacred oratory ? Is it "sacred" oratory, with these devices scattered along through it ? And when you come to preach from a text, may that text be made to do a duty it never thought of till you got hold of it and had a present and particular good you wanted to accomplish by its teaching. Of course anybody can see that we must not stand up and squarely say "Dearly Beloved, this text teaches so and so," when it does not. We may say, "It suggests to me the following twelve heads," and then we may go on to make our whole discourse on those twelve heads. There is no lying in that ; but how must that text feel all this while ? Doubtless it is flattered that an educated and cultivated and religious man is so crammed with suggestions by its humble self ; at the same time must not that text be mournfully remarking in its own mind now and then ; "But I have a meaning of my own (so I always supposed), a God's meaning ; and on the whole I should be pleased if you would make a thirteenth head on that, and let me serve to that extent, as my original self ; and not as a mere suggestor."

These points of equity are confusing to an undisciplined conscience, but to a man who is honest in every atom of him, the appeal of that Bible text is full of pathos.

Now you see in a moment that in order to the truthful use of language, we are carried directly to philological and exegetical study. All people would agree that preachers need to be up in those studies as a matter of information ; but I say unto you to-day it is a matter of integrity also. What is slander? Well, one form of it is reporting that a man said something that he did not say. And why is not the Bible slandered when some inaccurate and unexegetical fumbler spends hours every week in public discourses on what the Bible says. Unquestionably the Bible does say many things that he declares it does. The general tone of its teachings on the principal topics of doctrine and life, he gets at. But the Bible is like a person. It has in it, so to speak, virgin-like and elusive qualities and shades of quality which must be perceived in order to a complete and completely reliable acquaintance with the Book. A merely English scholar may get a good deal from the Bible ; but a Greek and Hebrew scholar can get more. Words fairly quiver with delight when you hunt them out clear to their radicals. When I take my food in a rather wholesale and bolting fashion—so much food in so many minutes—I taste it, certainly, and wish I had more ; but my tongue does not at all reach those ultimate flavors of my bread and my meat, wherein and whereby, principally, meat is meat and not bread, and bread is bread and not meat—those ultimate flavors that the bread and the meat do most pride themselves on. It is impossible to get the whole marrow of Greek or Hebrew or Latin thought in an English rendering of it. Hebrew thought in an English dress, is Anglicized-Hebrew thought always—more or less. Thought, that essence of the mind, instinctively takes on a body of language that is surcharged with its own idiosyncrasies, and any other embodiment would be a misfit to a degree and so far not an embodiment. We should not say that any living thing was embodied, when some sort of externality was mechanically put upon it. No, embodiment proper is the unembodied vitally and therefore characteristically expressed.

So then our very veracity forces us to philology, to exegesis, to profound interpretation. If we intentionally misrepresent meanings, we are liars, plain as day. But if we misrepresent meanings through carelessness, or through laziness, it shows that we have in us the



making of a liar. We are willing to make statement after statement that we have never taken the trouble to verify. We are leaving a large part of the significance of our Bible—many a savory term, phrase, turn and idiom, unused and undetected. It is not right, I say.

Secondly.—Veracity in the use of language shows itself in the avoidance of overstatement—not to say understatement. Overstatement comes: From a real desire to lie: From an innocent over-rosiness of mental constitution from the womb. From an innocent over-endowment of sensibility. From ignorance, often. From a religious desire to make a strong impression and do good. Finally, and omitting, doubtless, some causes; from an over-done concentration on the particular object which we are trying for the moment to report. Please grant me a little pause on that last—thus:

Each object of thought is variously related to other objects of thought, and that one object cannot be seen accurately and accurately reported except as its numerous relations are perceived and weighed, and duly let in with their influence. For example:

Now it is a habit of multitudes of minds—preachers and all sorts—to contemplate things unrelationally. It is the curse of theology—one curse—that so many fail to contemplate its several momenta systematically. It is the curse of preaching—one curse—that the men, so many of them, sharpen their attention right down to the one truth or topic they happen to be on for the moment. It is the justice of God that they have up I will say, and if you had never heard of God before you would conclude that justice is all there is of him.

I know it is one of the inherent and necessary infirmities of any statement of a truth, that you isolate it more or less from other truths. Formulation is simply a setting of boundaries around the thing you formulate; and those boundaries would not be such if they did not fence off that thing to a degree from all those things to the which it is in fact related. If you say—"God is Justice!"—you have selected a single attribute of God from out of his many attributes, brought it into the foreground, magnified it, lifted it for the moment out of its real place in the organism of his attributes and committed an exaggeration, a temporary exaggeration. Formulation is exaggeration, always. If you preach on an attribute of God you cannot, at the same time, and in that single half-hour,

preach on his every other attribute, and thus avoid disproportion. No, you must bear down on the thing in hand, and accept what disproportion may occur. And then at some other time you must have God's Love for your topic, and bear down on that. And so on. But in all this your specific bearing down, you may tone your statements and reduce exaggeration to a minimum by being yourself a relational thinker—a man accustomed to recollect that God is manifold, made up of several great powers in magnificent equilibrium and co-ordination. The equilibrium and co-ordination of the forces of the created universe is but his harmony of living, projected and made visible. A being like Him when he came to create, could not do otherwise than have his universe like unto himself. I repeat, the way to reduce exaggeration to a minimum is to make yourself a relational thinker. One of the chief objects of education is to get young men into this relational habit. A man is not educated till he be brought to that. One of the tokens whereby you can tell a great man from a man little and scrappy, is that the latter takes truth in scraps, or single phases; and when he speaks gets right down on his scrap and cackles with all his might, while the great man handles truth integrally. He, as much as the lesser thinker, is compelled by the necessity of the case to expound truth one phase at a time and in that way exaggerate. Nevertheless you will hear in all he says on that phase a sound as from other phases. Particularly in the moderation of his statements will you hear that sound. His language is not pushed into the extreme possible intensity of language. While he shows that he has interest in his theme, he shows that he has heard of other themes. Focus the entire vital heat of your body on some single square inch of your body, and you have an interesting inflammation, an inflammation which attracts much more attention than forty whole bodies, with their heat uniformly distributed. And in like manner a preacher who accumulates his entire energy and fire on the one truth that he is discussing, and thinks of nothing else, may set the people agape more than the full-globed, all-comprehending man, whose heat on this and that does not proceed to the inflammatory point, because he has a fervid sense of numerous other truths and themes.

You have a good illustration of this that I am now trying to set forth in the mental temperance of a statesman or public man, who is historically informed and cultured; his temperance in the midst of the flow and passion of present events, as contrasted to the

vehemency, overaction and overstatement of the public man who, as knowing nothing of history, has nothing with which to compare the present. You will hear this last, saying :—"The treason of Jefferson Davis was the greatest crime since the crucifixion of the Son of God"—"Ulysses S. Grant is the greatest general since Julius Cæsar"—and like ear-catching utterances. "This presidential election is the most important one since the foundation of the government ; if we lose it, the cause of free government is set back a hundred years ;" and so on. Now if this man only knew anything that has occurred between the date of the crucifixion and the last election, he would be more entitled to make these stunning generalizations ; but he does not know. Perhaps some of these broad and impressive things that he says are true, but he does not know that they are. He is too ignorant historically for that.

Neither does that denominationalist who magnifies a pulpit orator of his own persuasion as the chief pulpit power of the Nineteenth Century, know much probably of the pulpit giants outside of his own circle and his own land.

The truth is, all persons and things and truths are truly rated only by those who are in possession of the large measures of history. Exaggeration is the child of ignorance. Exaggeration comes of an isolated and unrelational contemplation of the objects of thought.

But Gentlemen, there is a form of recoil from exaggeration, on which I ask you, so long as you live, to lay your rather undivided contempt. The moderation, the non-gushing habit of a wide-minded thinker, scholar and man of information, is a truly respectable and imposing thing, as I have already implied. His considerate diction and his tranquil argument go home with their whole force. You know the man, and deduct not one ounce from his statement. Even when his diction is really tame, as sometimes happens, by reason of his mortal fear of excess, you feel that an occasional iceberg in the midst of the general inflammatory condition of human thought, is a force in favor of sanity and repose ; and you do not mind running your own craft with her coppers all hot in under the shadow and wholesome chill of that solid mountain of ice. Also when your cool man, by reason of his many-sided knowledge, is made to be inordinately prudential and wavering, so that he drops out of the practical push of life, you recollect again his value in reducing the fierce temperature of the creation, and are thankful. Moreover if his prudentialism, and his unaffirmative or mildly affirm-

ative tone extends even to moral questions, so that his yea and nay are not wholly yea or nay, but a little of both ; as was supposed to be the case with our great Daniel Webster, in some respects, thirty or more years ago ; still, in the midst of the frantic positiveness of multitudes who are positive in inverse ratio to their information and their sense of the totality of things, it refreshes you to see an extreme man who is extreme in the direction of tranquillity and considerateness.

But I cannot say so much in praise of that affected moderation which we sometimes see—that refusal to be absolutely concluded and enthusiastic in respect of anything, which some persons put on. They put it on and there is where the contemptibleness of the thing comes in. They have no all-sided information and all-sided habit of thought, which moderates them ; but they moderate themselves intentionally and deliberately, because to be moderate is so like those unexcited and well-poised men and women who are informed and thoughtful. When I first visited the old world and saw certain first things over there, I was much moved ; but I had with me as a temporary companion, a young Englishman, to me a stranger, up from London on his country vacation, who sat in the same beautiful ruined Abbey that was near drowning me in a certain sort of emotion, and serenely nibbled his lunch. He was not hungry (we had just had our breakfast) but neither was he hungry for the Abbey ; and as between the two, it was much more genteel to eat and not let the Abbey run away with him, than to imitate me and let it out that he never before saw an Abbey in the beauty of hundreds of years of decline, and so advertise his own greenness. The gentility of indifferentism !—that is what I want you to despise. If you are so completely informed about Abbeys that you cannot learn anything more in that line, and if you have been daily rubbing against Abbeys from the moment you were born, and on that account are more bewitched with your lunch than with the moss-mantled pile ; why go on and eat ;—that is honest, and to that extent it is respectable. But if you are as unpracticed in Abbeys as is the over-flowing Yankee man at your side, and devote yourself to your lunch simply to lie, and notify him that you are not so much of a fool as he (which is just what millions do) then there is nothing respectable about it. To be green is no discredit necessarily (though it is a misfortune) but to be untruthful is a great discredit. Sometimes even young men and young women assume this gen-

teel indifference to all things, whereof I speak. When a mature person puts on indifference, we may be deceived by him at first. Possibly the man is as informed and experienced and as staled by experience as he appears to be ; but as to these young people we know better right off. They have not been in the world so long, and traveled about so much and so deeply entered into all sorts of things, that a fine landscape cannot flush them, and a fine oration, or concert, or picture is a weariness to their souls ; and a fascinating human character has no fascination, they have encountered such a glut of them. No ; they, keeping cool as they do, are little humbugs—and plain humbugs.

Is it exaggeration to oversee and overstate :—to wreck one's native tongue in trying to express one's strong impressions ; as some young gentlewomen are malignantly accused of doing—but is it not also exaggeration to purposely and guilefully cultivate languor, *ennui*, and an air as though you had seen everything there is to see, and sampled it, and engulfed yourself in satiety by much sampling ? Is it not exaggeration to profess and pretend to the moderation of the many-sided observer and thinker ? Is it veracity in the use of language, to call a whirlwind "elegant" and an avalanche "a nice thing" and a magnificent sunset "a rather pretty scene" and a Gen Gordon shut up in Egypt, and oblivious of everything save God and duty, "too lovely for anything !" Are not these diminutives—these hypocritical diminutives, lies. If they had in them only the infirmity of inexactness they would be inveracious and a sort of slander—for no one is entitled to apply to things that are in reality so overwhelming, such incommensurate, petty and miserable adjectives. But when these adjectives are selected for a hypocritical purpose, they contain a second immorality.

O ! how good it is to get out of all this feebleness and imposition, and out of real indifferentism with its tamed-down language and its unflushed face, into the outrightness, rest and self-commitment of Shakespeare, and Hebrew prophets, and imprecating Psalmists who knew the difference between Babylon and Jerusalem and did not doubt that God also knew the difference !—to get away from that everlasting balancing of probabilities in the moral field, which emasculates a man's affirmatives and his negatives too—to be out of it into the clear sight and the perpendicular faith even of such whole-hearted haters, and un-Addisonian rhetoricians, as Thomas Carlyle, and Dr. South, and John Milton, in some of his prose



utterances ; and many another utterly resolved and vehement soul. Of course no extreme can be defended, but as between the lackadaisical on the one side and the over-rugged on the other ; as between Hercules and Nancy ; as between strength, vision and fresh sensibility exaggerated, and the exaggeration of diminutives, indifferentism, pretense, and weakliness, can any reasonable mortal hesitate ?

Now in some pulpits it is Nancy that you hear, and not Hercules. It is not Miss Nancy, but alas ! it is Mr. Nancy. First, he thinks it would be unphilosophical to warm up and say something. The true way is to put in the pros and cons, and when you get them all in to just stand in them chin-deep, and look helpless. This preacher has reduced dubiousness to a fine art. Doubtless he has escaped out of exaggeration, but he has not landed anywhere. Neither has he landed his people anywhere. In the next place he abates his diction to correspond to the neutralism of his thought. It is proper and pale, and inoffensive and unpotential, and void of positive verity. An adjective with a real swelter in it would convulse him. Doubtless there are many sweltering realities in the Book and Providence of God, and in human life, which ought not to be formulated at all unless in terms correspondingly sultry ; but this man is in the moral bewilderment of the idea that a thing understated is not wronged and therefore, to be on the safe side he tones down his utterance beyond the facts.

To be on the safe side ! Well, Gentlemen, as my final contribution to your enlightenment to-day, I will draw out here a recipe for keeping on the safe side. Are you afraid you shall seem more interested in the things you describe than the real worth of those things will justify ? Are you afraid you shall seem more orthodox than you are, more pious than you are, more fascinated with each parishioner than any mortal of any discrimination can be with some of them, more emphatic all around than the facts will warrant ?

Well, listen. As regards the truths we are called to preach, and the human and divine interests we are set to conserve and advance ; thank God over-emphasis is not possible. Not to emphasize them and make everything ring when we discuss them, is to imitate that man referred to who spoke of a hurricane as "a nice thing," and of God's vice-regent in the Egyptian desert with the hosts of Hell surging at his gates day and night, as "just lovely." Let no preacher practically disparage the things whereof he speaks, by

speaking of them faintly and in a small way. They are not small, and he need not be when he handles them.

There is no difficulty there. The lawyers and the doctors do not have just the advantage that we do at that point. The realities to which they give themselves are pretty great, and they may put in their energies accordingly ; but ours are much greater. We have undertaken to co-work with the Son of God in the spiritual salvation of the world, to fill up (O ! searching thought ! ) “to fill up that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of the Church which is his body ;” not by physical endurances necessarily or mainly, but by entering into the fellowship of his spiritual anxieties and sufferings, which spiritual sufferings of his are the pivotal point of his mediatorship, the point of ultimate pressure when he bore the sin of the whole world. If a lawyer gets a case involving a few millions, he considers that he has a great case, and he moves into it with all his powers, and his entire argument palpitates with the heart-beat of those millions, while neither judge nor jury look upon it as anything unseemly or disproportionate if his language seems to say continually :—“This is a matter of millions.” Well, let us preachers talk as though we had millions in the case.

But as to that recipe. Here it is.

If a man is substantially orthodox, and substantially religious, and substantially resolved to save his every parishioner, then he himself is saved forever and utterly from all kinds of excessive action and speech.

I read in an English newspaper of a gentleman in London, a Swiss gentleman of much character and ability, but of a curious negligence in keeping himself personally clean. He began to be ailing in a way that he did not understand and he sought the counsel of an eminent physician, who knew his peculiarities. And this physician wrote out an uncommonly particularized and professional prescription for him ;—which he carefully read and then said : “Why, Doctor, I do not see that this is anything more or less than taking a bath.” “Well, it is open to that objection,” replied the Doctor. “It is open to that objection.”

And my recipe is similar to that. I introduced it with some pomposity, as though I were opening a brand new box of wisdom, but in reality it is as old-fashioned and tame as taking a bath. I simply say :—My Dear Young Brethren, do you just be good men, and then you may speak and act, orthodoxly, piously, and with

pastoral affection. There will be no exaggeration and hypocrisy of exaggeration in it. But out of you (as the Holy Scriptures intimate), shall flow veracities like rivers of living water.

Now notice, I do not insist that you shall be good, by a goodness such as only one minister in ten thousand reaches, before you shall let yourself be a preacher or a pastor at all. Of course that one man in ten thousand is the very man you must try to be—it were shameful to aim at anything less—but the presumption is that you will not be he. You will be more than you would be if you did not strive to be he, but the chances that you will reach to his stature are nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine to one. A discouraging way to state it, but we want to get at the facts.

Well, as extreme saintliness is possible to you, but extremely improbable (according to those figures), I advise you to make sure of a decent average of goodness among that multitudinous nine thousand and over; and on that as a working basis rest your ministry down, and go on. As your years multiply and your spiritual strivings multiply, and you approximate that eminent and solitary divine just mentioned, you can lift your ministry, your preaching and your pastoring to square with the new facts. If your preaching and pastor-work advances faster than you advance toward yonder eminent saint, that is in veracity—the thing I am lecturing against—but if you advance your talk, and your deeds, and your asking your people about their families, only and precisely as you yourself do interiorly get on, that is exactness before God and man and before your own conscience. Do that, and you can roll yourself as a sweet morsel under your own tongue, all the while. And you can do that. Theoretically, you can be the one minister in ten thousand, but with ten thousand figures, save one, against you, your theoretical possibility is mainly a beautiful object of contemplation. But to be a good man simply, is practicable. You can have a sharp and effective conscience. You can have religious feelings. You can have communion with God. You can have the graces of the Holy Spirit. I will not stop to name those graces, but you can have them. And you can have in you a daily steadfast push to do your duty. And if you get all those plain and feasible things, you are a man worth having in any parish—city or country.

And then as to that oftentimes pretty difficult matter, the having an enormous interest in every pew-holder, both temporal and spiritual, I observe :

First.—That there are undeniable differences in pew-holders, which differences not to see were unintellectual and invertebrate. Some of these persons it were the work of a lifetime to warm up to, particularly if you keep in mind their characteristic imperfections. By dropping those and making believe that they have no imperfections you may embrace them with a degree of heartiness :—but it is better to take men just as they are, and accurately size the dimensions of the problem and the job you have to handle. Let us know the worst.

It would seem then—taking the matter as far as we have now got along in it—it would seem that a minister, an honest and discerning minister, simply cannot treat his whole parish alike. He may treat them alike in all ways of practical kindness, but when you come to the endearments of personal intercourse, the melting right down on one's neck, so to say ; why he cannot. He must select. Even Jesus knew the difference between Herod and Pilate and Mary of Bethany—knew it and marked it.

But let us rise a little now, and light up this terrible matter, by a second remark, which does light it up, and let the minister out into a plain and good path.

Our specific and characteristic relation as ministers to our congregation is religious and not social. To be sure sociality comes in, incidentally, and may be very sweet, just as when we go a-fishing, it is necessary, and may be refreshing, to get down to and perhaps into the same water with the fish. The fish are pleased and we are pleased very likely. But that is not what we are there for. No ; we are there to catch them. If their being pleased to have us in the water with them, makes it easier for us to catch them (as it probably does), it is all right ; but pleasure—either in them or in us—is not our end.

Well, the moment a minister disengages his end or aim from sociality, and everything else, and bears right down to the personal salvation of these men and women, the solemn question whether he can bring himself to really enjoy falling on their necks, and on the neck of Herod just the same as on the neck of John or Mary—that question subsides. He does not care whether he can or not. He loves them all, as the purchase of the Lord Jesus ; and the more it seems unlikely he can ever love this one and that one of them on natural principles, they are so faulty and disagreeable, the more intensely is he drawn to them in spiritual affection. Just

think of Mr. Moody standing before a great assembly of roughs in low London or low New York ! A steaming witch's cauldron were not more repulsive to every moral sense and every physical sense. But this very repulsiveness is what attracts Moody to them infinitely. I do not doubt that the man, any time, on a square authentic challenge, would die for the most far-gone scoundrel among them ; and do it joyfully. Let a minister once get that affection into him, the religious affection, the true affection of his holy office, and it transfigures all his Herod pew-holders before his eyes. —Yes, the beauty of him who died for these Herods is imputed to them, and he sees them in the glory of that ideal character to which by the redeeming grace of God they may come.



## HIGH-HEARTEDNESS IN THE MINISTRY.

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My brethren, it is one of the best blessings to be permitted to be a Christian minister. Permitted by your personal make-up ; permitted by your circumstances ; permitted by the favorable voice of the Church ; and permitted by the sufficiently clear call of your God, delivered to you by the Holy Ghost operating in your consciousness. With what a solid and good feeling, now, I give to you that testimony, founded on what little I myself have experienced and upon a considerable observation of the ministerial class. In fact, I do not see how a man could consent to stand here and speak in these courses of lectures at all, if he did not have that feeling about our vocation. I think your honest faces down there, looking at him, would make him blush at his own hypocrisy should he try it.

However, there is slag in almost everything. This is a world of slag. Slag came in, when Adam went out of paradise and it is here yet. And so there naturally come into our work some things, and some things are often allowed to come in when there is no need of it, which tend to kill enthusiasm in the minister ; so that you can actually see scattered instances of them, who started out with freshness, determination and expectancy, but have gradually sunk into routine, dignity, decorum and unhopefulness. They are not demoralized, in the sense of being immoral, these that I have in mind. They have not lapsed from the truth. Their trumpet, what trumpet they have, gives no uncertain sound. They move through the circle of their duties with the punctuality of a chronometer. Their long professional service has stamped their personal appearance and demeanor, so that they are eminently respectable men to meet and look at. And they will keep on in their appointed round

till their years end, and will have some conventional scripture to speak for them, on their tombstone. But they are not enthusiastic. I do not mean gushing, but enthusiastic. Some of God's ministers are as chirping at sixty or seventy years of age, as they were when they began. They have found nothing in the courses of their work to make them humdrum. But these others have. And now, what is it that they have found? Just what the chipper ones have found, in many respects.

For instance, when they began to be preachers, they supposed that if they made good arguments, before a reasonable congregation, and quoted good scriptures and closed their discourse always with a suitable, well-meant, unimpeachable application of their subject, then all those reasonable human beings would be convinced and act accordingly; but behold, as often as anyway, when they preached there was no particular sign that anybody was convinced. They, the people, listened to their sensible and warm-hearted young man, and were glad they had secured such a promising minister, at a price that they were able to pay, but as for proceeding to be converted, or to be perfectly sanctified, they did not. Well, if this discomfiture had been for one Sunday only, the man could have lived through it; but lo, it kept on. By and by, it began to occur to him that the law of Christian preaching might be, that it does not convert every soul instantly. Then he remembered that, in the School of Divinity, he had been taught how the heart of man is depraved and unwilling and hard to melt down, and so on. He recollected too, what he had heard many times, but never thought of, that the most successful ministers who ever lived, had more defeats than successes in this very matter of souls saved. Whitefield, Moody, Wesley leave a hundred times more people unconverted than they convert, in the places and mass-meetings where they speak. And as though to indicate to them that they must all expect just that, it is related of Jesus himself that whenever he spoke to men, the listening multitude divided, some saying yes and some saying no; and divided in no middle line; moreover, the result being, even as Jesus expressed it: "Many are called, but few chosen."

It seems strange that a person can live twenty to thirty years in the world, go through College, spend three years in a theological Seminary, hear a good many valuable lectures from a series of plain-spoken and warning men; and yet commence to be a preacher with no practical sense of this thing that I am now telling; so that he is

disappointed and chilled when his charges from the pulpit all the year long are so numerous resisted and not made the most of, by both saint and sinner ; but so it is—being told a thing is so curiously different from personally encountering it.

To tell the truth, my young brethren, I myself struck a streak of disappointment right at this point. I did not find what I expected. I did not know that I expected it—we never know half that is in us—and one of the great uses of practical life is to bring us to a consciousness of our own contents, in the way of knowledge and the rest. I did not give up, but I could see how a man might at any rate, how he might slacken by and by, and deliver his strokes for conscience sake mostly ; or because it is the proper thing to do, according to all accounts. I think my teacher in theology helped me to a good deal of confidence in the power of mere argument. Of course he did not fail to inform me, that argument unassisted by God's direct unction must be a failure, but he made such an admirable argument always himself, when he tried and withal had such a fine soldierliness in it, that made as I happen to be I could remember not much save that. I believed his doctrine of unction ; but as often comes to pass with beliefs, I folded it decently and respectfully away ; swore by it when called upon and proceeded to get along without it in a measure. Therefore, my fervor in preaching was in risk of ebbing, when I saw that all the world was not directly moved thereby.

Again, some are cooled a little by the unexpected parishes in which they find themselves somehow—soon or late—small parishes—parishes not on the line of any railway or turnpike—parishes of limited salaries, limited church attendance, limited increase of children, limited vivacity and perhaps limited intelligence. They never supposed their merits ranked as low as that. They were bright enough in the Seminary, wrote good compositions, attended to their studies, were reasonably well spoken of, had a good voice, were easy and successful in their gestures, took their license in their pocket all their last year and went about preaching with what seemed acceptance at the time ; and now, at the end of twenty years, they are lodged and seemingly stuck where there is neither railway, turnpike, nor increase. Such a discrepancy between a man and his circumstances no one can appreciate who has not been in it. And then the way it confuses a man's mind ! How did I get here, he says. What secret faculty, attribute or endowment in me, or set of

endowments was it, that caused me to be shoved along down and down, by not easy stages, to this place and doom.

Dear Soul! that has happened to him, very possibly, which happens to men in every calling. He is a solidly meritorious person, just as he thinks he is. His head is excellent and his character is excellent. But time and sufficient experiment have brought to light a constitutional disqualification in him for that particular service on the face of the earth, the service ministerial. Very likely it is a minute point; but as the smallest kind of a sufficiently sharp tack in the bottom of a man's shoe controls the whole situation and makes it necessary for him to get another shoe, so that little disqualification is the explanation of the mystery of that minister's career. When I heard Cardinal Manning and listened to the victorious and far-reaching sniff that he gave whenever he made a thoroughly good point, I thought that for a settled preacher in a first-class position, he would hardly answer. A sniff is nothing. It does not disprove a person's character. It does not show that he is not learned, able and godly enough to be a Cardinal; but it might prevent his being a Cardinal, if the duties of that great office required him to stay on one spot forever, among the same set of people and in such close quarters that they could hear and could not fail to hear, every sniff he put forth—thousands in a year, perhaps.

It would be ungracious in me to give a list of the many kinds of sniff that hinder men. It is some defect in the man's oratory, perhaps; it is something or other that you can hardly put your finger on in his manners; it is his inborn proneness to doubt a thing which he has struggled against but has not yet extirpated; and his preaching, in various ways, is made unacceptable by that feature of his mind; or unconsciously he is dogmatic and conscientiously aggressive and can hardly sit five minutes in a parlor without coming at you with his battering ram; his well-meant and Christian battering ram, to be sure, and designed for your salvation; nevertheless, you do not want any salvation that is brought in that way—depraved human nature being ridiculously particular about the way in which good is done to it. Or this good man is naturally very reserved and the modern parish insists on a good deal of effusiveness; or while he is congenial to old people, he is not winning with the young—or to boil it all down into one sentence and state vaguely what I do not relish analyzing—he is not popular. It was supposed when he was young that he was going to be popular; and he supposed he was;

but no one then suspected the sharp tack that would begin to stick up in him, as parish after parish tried him on and wore him a little. So he is not as enthusiastic as he used to be.

Again, and on the other hand, some ministers are so popular that, being much praised and stall-fed by their admiring parishioners, they grow fat, contented and dull and greatly need to be pricked by the sharp pricks of adversity. To be sure, when they get soggy enough, they are no longer popular; but what made them soggy was too much prosperity and pampering. Pampering tends to kill a man's noble enthusiasm.

Again, his early enthusiasm may grow tame by reason of his habitual contact as a preacher—his professional contact—with the truths of God and the things of God. All the time he moves among them; all the time it is his business to handle them; all the time this necessary familiarity may reduce that lively sensibility in regard to them which he once knew.

And again, a minister may unwittingly numb himself and settle into the deadness of rut-work and go by routine rather than by spontaneity, by starting on his career with a not absolutely supreme intention to do good and let all considerations, personal to himself, go. There is an opportunity for great self-deception just there, my brethren. I am not willing to believe that any man of you is conscious at present of anything but a determination to do God's work and not cherish yourself—not care more for salary than you do for souls—not delight in a brilliant parish call more than in a large opportunity to bless mankind. Theological students have a good deal of human nature in them, but they are all honest to that extent. However, they are not all as sanctified as they may think they are. A quotable per centage of the students here and everywhere, will incline to use the parishes that call them and their opportunities as ministers, for their own advantage more than they ought. They are capable of that kind of alloy in their motives. They do not now distinctly anticipate such works, but it will come. Well, they must fight against it. I presume all of them will. And one of the reasons why they had better is, that a service of God carried on with that admixture of the personal element works tremendously to extinguish the characteristic enthusiasms of the ministerial office; and I can point you to men now living whose life is unhappy, who have a great deal to say against parishes and their meanness and their poor appreciation of what is done for them, and who discharge



their official duties in a perfunctory torpidity and with just the joy of a man on a tread-mill, because they have slipped along into self-serving ; although it may be that even yet they are not quite aware of the slipping.

I have now given you some specimens of the things that tame down the ministerial man from the beautiful ardor and expectation of his first sermon-work and pastor-work, into the round-and-round and around again, of a merely perfunctory fidelity. I have omitted, though, one of the frequent forces of dullness, namely :—the necessarily routine character of some of our work—and I have made the omission, because I want to discuss the formidable subject of routine in another lecture.

I have also omitted the depression which a good and faithful minister may feel when he notices the numerous Christian congregations that are captivated by shallow men in the ministry and men of no taste and mock orators and unserious men and men every way unseasoned, untempered, unregulated and uncalled of the Holy Ghost too, one would say. When a true minister is sick of such sights, he is led to inquire within himself, why should I offer my services to this unperceiving generation. Would that God would let me out into some pursuit and calling where a sterling man goes for what he is worth. So frequent has it come to be that people are bewitched by inferior ministerial gifts, that great popularity in a preacher almost creates a presumption against him, in serious and well-balanced souls, who know nothing of the man as yet, save the one thing that he is very popular. Mr. Ruskin hits the matter off, I remember, in one of his customary thrusts, by saying :—“a popular preacher is admired by the majority of his congregation for the worst parts of his sermon.” But let it go. I am glad to be through with this business of telling what depresses ministers and deadens them. For now I am ready to spread myself out on the things that nourish enthusiasm in a man and keep him alive, merry-hearted and aflame, notwithstanding all possible disadvantages and discouragements.

And first, the feasibility of a life-long chirkriness and upbubbling of the soul, is settled by the many plain instances of the same. We look for some bubble in boys and beginners. It is natural to them. The force of life in them is not yet abated by the pull and the drain of multiplied years, and they have not come into the full stress and wear of affairs. But have we not all seen old boys in the ministry,

gray and worn men with a boy's heart under their old jackets, a boy's zeal, a boy's dauntless expectation ; men that like to preach as well as they ever did, like to strive for souls, like to defend the truth, like to believe in the kingdom of God and its ultimate dominion? Why yes ; and things like that are not uncommon in other professions and pursuits. There are aged lawyers whose passion for legal investigation and work is a supreme delight to them and much more than in the days of their youth. And scientists and musicians and teachers and business men, have a similar experience ; and even sheer money-getting, that pitiful blind lust for accumulation, often grows to an inextinguishable rage, as the years go on ; so that the man goes out of the world at four or five score—no matter how old—with a money-eagerness still on the increase. If a secular pursuit, that in the nature of things cannot engage and inspire one-half of a man's soul, may make him so indefatigable and so elate, so long as he lives ; and if a pursuit that is not only secular but directly cross and crash to everything fine, noble and spiritually pure in our nature, can keep a man alive, agog, industrious and devoted, so long as breath remains in his body ; would it not be strange and infamous too, if ministers failed to reach a similar undying zeal ; stimulated as they are by the highest conceivable motives and fascinations.

The lawyer, the scientist, the statesman, the philosopher, is led on, I will suppose, by his love of truth ; but consider the superiority of the truths that lead us on, as suited to inflame feeling and endeavor ; the truths of God and the truths of man as the child of God, foredoomed to immortality and chosen in Jesus Christ to eternal life. Our truths stir us up and keep us going, by their very dimensions. It is no mere sharpness that we are called to in our studies, not microscopy, pettifogging, atomizing, however important they may be ; but it is to affairs of size, of out-stretching self-expansions, which ask for the grandest we can do.

And another thing ; some might think that this very size that I speak of, in the truths we pursue, must prevent our getting far into them and therefore must tend to daunt endeavor and depress the mind's natural ardor ; but we, who are in the business, know it is not so. A great truth is much more stimulating than little truths. Moreover, we do get in to them by our labors. We find out one thing after another in the field of religion and the field of theology ; partly because things actually new are brought to light now and then and

partly because the very old truths which we have always known and the Church has always known, are freshened to our apprehension in such wise as to seem new. How common it is for Bible readers and students, to have texts that they learned in childhood, have run against and considered a hundred times since and have often expounded to others, suddenly star forth before them like meteors, and fill them with divine delight. Along the horizon of every inquiring and devout mind, there is always a flicker and a glow, as of truths yet hidden behind the hills ; and the expectancy thus kept alive and the deep questioning, are among the most sterling joys of our life. How reprehensible and dreadful is that minister who, in the midst of such possibilities and called daily to handle and apply the truth of truths, can humdrum and gradually die down into just a respectable automaton !

Passing now to a point under the head of supports for a minister's enthusiasm, I mention something very fundamental indeed ; something which alone is more than sufficient for any amount of perseverance, high-heartedness and increase of joy. I refer to that sense of mission which we may all have and one as much as another. In so far as your call to the ministry and your mission to men from God, is by you simply inferred from your mental endowments, your proficiency in scriptural and other learning, your ability to address assemblies, your circumstances in life and the verdict of an ecclesiastical council, assembled to pass upon your case and send you out humanly authenticated, multitudes of men may have a better call than you. Their gifts, acquisitions and external furtherances, may be more than yours ; and the council that inspected them may have worked itself up to a more rousing majority than your council could see its way to ; and even if your council was unanimous about you, possibly it was one of those luke-warm, guess-work and charitable unanimities, that are fair to look upon outwardly, but within are only so-so.

But there is one form of call in the which you need not be beaten by mortal man, be he never so brilliant and the darling of his council ; your access to God and God's access to you, the mutual approach of you and God, is just as open, direct and assured as can be another's ; and that which is the ultimate factor in all real calls—the soul's message and commission from God direct, private and inaccessible to all inspection by bystanders, doubters, critics, well-wishers and inquiring councils—that may be yours perfectly. Many

a man has it and so may you. And while I would not advise a young man to refuse the ministry because this his inward summons from God had not yet come to be quite irresistible ; the fact being that many an excellent and successful minister has gone to his work without that clear inward foreordination that he desired at the time ; yet I would say to you, that when a man has reached the thick and thunder of life's battle, or say, when the great waters that are fain to drown him, strangle his zeal, kill his vigor, put out all his fires and water-log him generally, are rolling in, there is no dam against them more heaven-high and solid that he can raise, than his constant remembrance how when he first went out on this business of trying to save souls, he did not send himself, and was not sent by man in the main, and was not pushed in by a lot of conspiring circumstances, but was sweetly constrained by the spirit of all grace. And so constrained it would have been the woe of his life if he had not gone in ; so constrained too, that he could have withstood, (so he felt at the time), the lack of all customary external furtherances ; and perhaps even the adverse finding of a fallible human council. How such a memory as that lights up a poor, tried minister's soul and keeps him warm and elate forever. There is nothing perfunctory about him and cannot be.

But as I intimated, many (and perhaps a majority,) are in the ministerial office with no such supreme off-sent to fall back on when life grows heavy, when the parish is small and away from the turnpike, when they find they are not orators and when perhaps even their personal godliness seems mysteriously to have less weight with the populace that they would have supposed it must. They may be truly called ; that is, they are in the vocation where they ought to be ; and yet they did not secure, when they started, quite that call in the soul to which I have referred ; and now what shall they do ?

I should reason on their case in this way. It is not wonderful that they missed that special, luminous, self-evidencing, never-to-be-forgotten call, at the beginning of their official career. They were young—young in every respect. They did not realize the worth of such a call and therefore did not seek for it so earnestly as they might. They had not learned the secret of full converse with God. In their exuberant young energy they did not conceive the miserable uselessness of all human energies, however exuberant, aside from the spirit of God. Most men have to do their natural best

and be baffled a thousand times, before they can learn that one thing. It is not wonderful then, I say, that these ministers have not a first-class "call" to remember and ground on and get daily strength from.

But now they have had experience. The futility of man's forth-puttings to do God's works, they have learned from many a defeat. Contrariwise, the triumph of the feeblest forth-puttings, if only God assists, they have also learned ; by an occasional experience of their own and by a good deal of watching of ungifted but consecrated brethren, they have learned the way of prayer. The path between them and their God is trodden bare with their footsteps. So now they are in a way to get a call for themselves. They need not strike out for a great general call to cover their entire remaining life, such a call as a young man before he begins may naturally seek. No, let them push for a smaller thing than that, a thing, at any rate, more detailed and close at hand. For instance : let them refuse to preach on any given occasion till God distinctly gives them the sermon for that occasion—the topic—the text—the handling of the topic. Let them insist on that specific call. It is a pretty cheap minister that never had a sermon given him. And if he can have one, he can have a thousand and every one. The God that gave the one can give the rest. The man that got the one, can get the rest. The secret that brought the one, will bring them numberless and sure ; and the secret that brought the sermon, will bring anything. For instance, the minister can have his public prayer given him, or the private word of counsel he is going to speak, or the settlement of the numerous practical questions that come up in the course of his ministry, as easily as he can have his sermon given. And all these givings from God are specific calls of God. Hence, when a man moves out to a particular thing on a call, he moves strong ; and he is happy and he tends to believe in the ministerial office ; and he thinks a parish off from the turnpike is worth saving and might fitly occupy the gifts of an archangel. When some deacon of his, with a strong and penetrating mind and frank and conscientious habit of speech and a due sense of his official importance, tells him that he did not enjoy his sermon, did not approve of it and did not think he was impressive in its delivery ; although the minister is mortified at first and confused in his mind, nevertheless, presently it comes to him that he got that sermon from God, on his knees—on his knees more than once—on his knees every day while he was writing it he



was speaking with God and God was speaking with him ; and while he was sitting at his table making his pen go, hunting for scriptural references, looking at his commentaries, doing his work, his soul felt itself to be feasting—it was feasting—God feasted him ; and in that way constantly God undersigned his name to that sermon—and a man with all this recollection and assurance in him, can stand ten deacons—ten perspicacious deacons. And the beauty of it is, he can stand them, not as withstanding them, not combatively, not resentfully, but receptively, genially and in that prudent spirit of silence, which is so wholesome always in a parish. Why should this minister make contention, or feel hurt, over a matter on which God has definitely spoken to him. The minister may be mistaken about God's part in that sermon—to mistake is human—but probably he is not mistaken. He is no more likely to be mistaken than he is in any other quite plain thing. However, all I want to inculcate along here, is the general idea of the practicability and the usefulness of calls as numerous as the numerous details of a minister's daily life and labors ; and emphatically do I wish to lift up and magnify these specific habitual calls, as a first-rate antidote for the dejections, or forces of dejection, inherent in our office ; and the much more multiplied dejections that are not inherent in the office, but are let in and lugged in by ministers themselves ; and are thrust in by perverse or misjudging men and women on the outside.

It is often that ministers find their circumstances rather desolate—their deacons too perspicacious—their congregations too full of old roots of bitterness ; their own oratory too feeble and their salaries as feeble as their oratory. But none of these things move them, or diminish their industry, fire and hope, provided all along through the stretches of desolation, God drops in His clear, sweet calls and calls, like bells out of the sky, and fills the souls of his servants with the great music of them.

But now, thirdly ; close along side of what I have been saying, comes this thought ; a man in close practical converse with God, in the manner just explained, is instinctively hopeful, warm and undaunted and unable to be sunk in his spirit by any criss-cross of circumstances. It is not a matter of reasoning, thus—"This sermon of mine was unquestionably given to me by my God, because I besought him ; therefore I stand to it, deacon or no deacon and rejoice therein"—no, the matter of which I now speak is much less argumentative than that and much more mystical. It is this the

man, by virtue of his habitual, close terms with God in the work of getting his numberless calls, is unwittingly lifted up into a real partnership in God's own repose and sanguine expectation ; and so, when the deacon speaks to him, or when the general work of God moves on tediously in his parish, under his administration, or the individual soul that he has labored with for weeks cannot be won ; or his people get tired of his preaching and want him to move on, or what is worse because vaster, when the cause of salvation is stayed, or even retrograde throughout a whole nation and perchance throughout the world ; he has no feeling that these things are of any permanent moment ; he knows all the same that the kingdom of God stands sure ; that the lion of the tribe of Judah is to conquer ; that his own dead parish is not forsaken ; that yonder long-sought person in his parish is not doomed ; that other days of grace are to come. And somehow—he cannot explain how—as respects those not few personal instances to which salvation will certainly never reach, he is not cast down in just the way he should have supposed he would be ; he is sorry but he is not desperate ; it is something as though the persons were to be saved after all ; and in like manner, his own unexpectedly small and inefficacious ministry does not make him melancholy, not that exactly ; for perhaps it will add up at the last better than he fears ; the reports are not all in yet and they will not be till the day of judgment ; in any case, he simply cannot find it in his heart to take on about it, as though there were no God and no God's providence. He does not reason it out, I say once more, but no matter, the peace flows into him and the joy and the enthusiasm ; he can find few rational considerations to support it, perchance, at present, but it does not need such support ; it comes of itself—or to fall back to my original explanation, a man in daily converse with God, a man full of God's calls and God's personal dealings, by the nature of the case doth participate in God's own inscrutable serenity as he looks from his throne down on these same unnumbered, wide-spread deplorables of many kinds.

Now, brethren, I must give you another strong old recipe for lassitude, perfunctoriness and the numbness of routine in clerical people. This recipe now coming, does not operate on the outside of the difficulty. It does not comfort the numb minister by telling him how he can get his salary raised, or how he can make some eligible parish call him away from the uninteresting old spot where he now is, or anything of that kind ; but like all good recipes, it

moves straight in on his joints, marrow and reins and totally revolutionizes his inward parts. Let me open the matter in this way. St. Paul speaks of our fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and now what were those sufferings. They were these.

First, his self-denial when he left his primal state and incorporated himself in our lowly flesh and became subject to earthly conditions.

Next, he took the burden of our dreadful case on to his sympathetic feeling, thus bearing our sins as no man or angel could begin to, because neither man or angel is deep enough in his sensibilities, and because he is not comprehensive enough, either intellectually or morally, to gather in the details of our lot and doom, in their entire number and their entire size.

Next, in that which has come to be known, preeminently, as the passion of Jesus, there was an unsearchable transaction between him and his (and our) God, wherein he was dealt with and consented to be dealt with and rejoiced to be dealt with, in a manner full of agony for him, but full of deliverance for us—a transaction which has been always both the fascination and the despair of theology:—a transaction too around which the innumerable company of non-expert thinkers and Christians have flocked, as though they all knew, by their regenerated intuitions, that in the bosom of that mystery somewhere, the crucial somewhat of their salvation was wrought. But no matter about explanations and waiving everything save one thing, I say, Jesus did suffer for us, substitutionally and mediatorially.

And now, as to our fellowship with him, in the three august particulars of his suffering, just named; his suffering by incarnation, his suffering by sympathy and his suffering in the mystery of the cross. I need not argue that as regards incarnation and the suffering thereof he must stand forever alone, no mortal being able to share it; and as regards his crucifixion and the substitutional and propitiatory suffering, in that he must, in the nature of the case, stand forever alone; so that the only remaining particular or point at which such as we can follow him is his sympathetic deep concern for men. And even there, we can only follow him afar off; but we can follow him—yes, what he felt we can feel in kind, and it is one of the earmarks of our regeneration if we do.

And this concern for men, this Christ-like concern, does not concentrate wholly or mainly on man as an embodied this-world, temporal creature; a being that needs to be fed, clothed, housed,

educated and decorously buried ; that sort of sympathy is humanitarianism and while Jesus was a humanitarian, that was not at all the unique feature in his character, function and career. Jesus addressed himself to man as a spiritual personage and spiritually fallen ; and whereinsoever he was sympathetically crushed by our lot, that was the great point of the crush ; and it belongs to us to enter his fellowship precisely there ; and a minister is no minister, but only a lecturer and secularist, until he has entered there. And it lies in the line of my subject to-day to add, that the minister who enters there and there sympathetically expatiates, or as some would express it, the minister who loves souls, aches for them, works for them, storms heaven for them and has them for the spinal cord of his whole official activity, is habitually full of joy, push and spiritual seership, and can no more be dampened and made a professional routinist and stick, than can God's angels.

The only objection I have to that traditional phraseology, "love for souls," as a description of our fellowship with Christ in his suffering sympathy with men, is that it is not broad enough. "Love for souls" and "love for men," are by no means equivalent and interchangeable phrases. A man is more than a soul. A man is a soul and a body, with all that implies. And Jesus did not come to save souls any more truly than he came to save bodies, with all their belongings, conditions and inferences. The gist of the doctrine of the resurrection on one principal side of it, is that Jesus assumed the human body, in its limitation, disability and wreck ; took it down into the tomb, where by right it belonged, under the old sentence,—"The wages of sin is death," and rose with it, transubstantiated into a body, spiritual, invulnerable, incorruptible and immortal ; and that when he thus rose, or more accurately, when, after forty days of lingering here, he ascended to the right hand of God, he shed forth the Holy Ghost as he had promised he would, to start the practical recovery of our souls and our bodies ; our souls right away and our bodies when the good time comes ; that recovery of our bodies being sure to be a repetition, limb for limb and line for line, of the recovery of his own body, when he emerged from the grave, transubstantiated, spiritual, invulnerable, incorruptible and immortal. It is not good theology then, to say "love for souls,"—that is if you would be precise. It is not always necessary to be precise ; but if we evangelical men complain of humanitarians that they omit the souls of men from their anxieties and endeavors, we, on our part,

must take care not to fall into a similar pit and omit the bodies of men from our concern, our theology and our benevolent forth-puttings. There is at present a confused push of indiscriminating persons in the Christian Church against the resurrection of the body. They think it is more spiritual and refined to ignore bodies and not let the Christian salvation save them ; but the "vile body," that St. Paul tells about, is no viler than the vile soul that lives in it—not a whit—and if you are to be so over refined and fastidious, you must ignore souls too. The fact is, the blessed Jesus addressed himself to souls and bodies both. He took us in our total, double-phased vileness ; and he raises us in mass, as sunken ships are raised. In his person to-day, at the right hand of God, we have a glorified man, soul and body both, the perfect type in that respect and the forerunner of the resurrection hosts that will pour into that same holy presence at the last ; all with their bodies on albeit in such a bodily transmutation, transfiguration and effulgence, as will make us all turn in memory to this description of Jesus on the mount of his transfiguration. "The fashion of his countenance was altered, his face did shine as the sun and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." Is there lack of refinement here?

The evangelical love for men then is what we ministers need in order to life-long, spontaneous workfulness and high spirit. I call it "evangelical" love in order to indicate two things ; that it is another better and bigger thing than were humanitarian love ; and that it is a God-born love, and is not natural. The Holy Ghost puts it into our hearts. And the one disability of some ministers is, that such distinctly supernatural love has never been put into them, and is not the spring whence their countless ministrations among men flow forth. They are proper persons. They behave. They dress rigidly in black suits. They call on their parishioners. They visit the sick. They are kind to the poor. They are very decorative on a ceremonial occasion. They uphold philanthropies, reforms, sound politics and those well-ordered conventionalities whereon the peace of the world reposes. There is a rustle of respectability in all their garments. And they accomplish much good, too. If we had never heard of a higher good than they ever accomplished, we should have said, they are doing well and none can do better. But there is a higher good. While you are thinking of such a minister as that and his fine image is before you, just say over in your mind, "the



fellowship of Christ's sufferings—the fellowship of Christ's sufferings." Say it over again and again till you and the other in question are enveloped in the atmosphere of it and he begins to be judged by its judgment and his round of service gets measured thereby; and see if he does not begin to shrink before you and sound hollow comparatively and hardly seem a Christian minister after all.

I speak sharply because the subject is a radical one. The one trouble of all disheartened ministers is that they have fallen out, or were never in, the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. It is enough to discourage any one, (the poor disheartened man says), not to have more converts, more hearers, more salary, more books, more railroad facilities, more proximity to the metropolis, than have I. Well sir, if you had in you the evangelical love for men and the soul-travail of the Lord Jesus, you would have all things, just as St. Paul said concerning himself, "as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

But brethren, loving men in the evangelical way, as distinguished from the humanitarian, is not the easiest thing in the world, but rather, is always a hard and unnatural thing; and therefore this serious question comes up: How shall we ministers get the love in question? Many of us are constitutionally sluggish in our emotions and unaffectionate. We may be pretty brainy and may therefore have a never-dying interest in subjects and in the unfolding of subjects in the pulpit; an interest that, taken in connection with our superior allotment of brains, makes able essayists of us and men a good deal admired; but as regards love to men, we are not gifted. You may be a humanitarian by birth, thousands are; but no one was ever born an evangelical man-lover. Moreover, the men themselves that we are to make a business of loving are extremely ineligible cases, as likely as not. Anybody can be a pretty fair lover if he may select his persons; but the dreadful thing about this whole matter of evangelical loving is, that the more unlovely the man or the woman, the more ardent and attached are we required to be. There we are; and what are we going to do about it?

In replying to that, I go to the very foundation of the difficulty at the start—I have done it already, in a passing way, but I wish to do it formally and saliently now—and to say, that spiritual fervor towards men, which is our most resplendent endowment as ministers of the Gospel, has its beginning and its eternal fountain in a

personal experience of Christ for our own selves, by the Holy Ghost ; a personal experience begun, kept up and daily renewed on and on. If a man cannot say, I am crucified with Christ—I am dead to sin and the world, and day by day I die to it, am dead and am buried, something after the strong manner of St. Paul, then he has no yearning over anybody, no motion within him to save his fellow men, no evangelical love. He may have natural love in quantities, any quantity ; enough to make of him an excellent humanitarian ; but this other great kind of love, this greatest of all kinds, he knows nothing about.

But I will suppose the minister has had his personal experience of Christ—his regeneration, in fact, by the Holy Ghost—that to begin with ; and that his experience of salvation is daily renewed within him, so that therefore, love to men is at last natural to him. Then next all along by study and meditation on the subject, he may enlarge his conception of man, of his rank among created things, of his very great dimensions, of his indefinite capacity for personal expansion, his ability to suffer and to enjoy, his eternal inability to go out of existence, the enormous ransom that has been paid down for him, his salvability to the uttermost, under the terms of that ransom, his present uncleanness and his possible holiness ; his present spiritual debility and inaptitude and his possible vigor ; his present weariness and disrelish and frequent despair in all moral action and his possible spontaneity therein ; his present dreadful selfishness towards his fellows and his possible concord and affection towards them ; his present profound affiliation with the kingdom of evil and his possible affiliation with the kingdom of God—and when the minister in these ways of meditation has reached an ample idea of man, an irresistible loving concern for him springs up in his soul ; and in all he does as preacher or pastor, he is made ardent, energetic and positively supernatural—while in this exalted passion, it is all but impossible for him to think of such a matter as his own salary and the size of his congregation, and the location of his parish, and the small power of his own oratory and the swarm of little dejections that fill the air like summer gnats and try to make an unhappy, complaining, tormented creature of him. They simply cannot do it.

It is related of many Christian martyrs, how they literally did not feel the fires that burned them up. I suppose there is good physiology for that and good psychology. And our martyrdoms in third-rate parishes, our personal exposure to able-bodied deacons

and others, our conscious lack of natural gifts, our lack, perhaps, of educational gifts, our unoratorical way of speaking, (the best we can do, but nothing to boast of), our curious capacity, it may be, to throw a coldness over the meeting when we go about in society, (one would need to write a volume to rehearse all the inadequacies of our tribe ; their real inadequacies, their imputed and alleged inadequacies and that still larger class of inadequacies which are neither real nor imputed, but are imagined by ourselves on the Mondays of each week ;) concerning the whole multitude of these, as the martyrs mentioned were sublimed by the cause they died for, in such wise that they did not know their hurts ; so our devotion to the ends of the ministry, our love for those for whom Jesus died, will at least minimize the disadvantages whereunto we may be appointed, and lead us to thank God every day that he was willing to put us into the service of his Son.

Now, my dear young men, I want to stop here, on this wholesome high upland which we have reached after some climbing ; but for the sake of a complete statement, I will take you down to a low place and say unto you, that a minister truly devoted to the high ends of his calling, as just now explained, will be likely to have all the temporal furtherances he really needs, all the admiration he can stand, and calls from parishes loud enough, as likely as not, to imperil his soul. Amen.

## LEGITIMATE ELEMENTS OF VARIETY IN CHURCH SERVICE.

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I pass to-day to a consideration of the legitimate elements of variety in the public services of the Church.

And when I say, legitimate elements, I intend in some wise a slant at the elements illegitimate that have been known to slip in, on a call from itching ears and itching eyes and that general itch of the mind, which a certain very reputable writer hit off and made immortal, when he said, "All the Athenians and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Modern life is much more diversified and complex than life in the old time was. There are more books to read, more theatres, operas, concerts, circuses, menageries and side-shows to attend ; more expansiveness, multiformity, glitter, gorgeousness and dizziness of social life ; swarms of reformatory movements, from the salvation of drunkards and street Arabs, to the betterment of the dress of women ; more clubs, guilds, and conspiracies ; more new-born ologies to investigate and be able to pass an examination upon—all these spicy inventions have to be supported and continually replenished with fresh victims. And at the top of everything, stands that admirable modern monster, the daily newspaper, to see that nobody goes to sleep in this miscellaneous business of living and taking in all these varieties and interesting phenomena, which are massed in the ample spaces of the first-class journal ; massed, described, spun out, ornamented and sometimes illustrated with wood-cuts, so that even children cry for them ; and by the time Sunday comes and these rather jaded and sometimes, blase multitudes of people who have been thus profusely entertained during the week, are assembled in the Sanctuary to have their souls

saved ; I tell you, they know a dull service from one stirring ; they want you to put on all your steam and blow your whistle in every conceivable pitch. What they most delight in, is to have you tell them in their Saturday's newspaper exactly what your entertainment is to be ; the subject of the sermon, the musical programme, the particular singers on duty for that day, who the preacher is and all about it. A manful resistance to this pressure is kept up by numerous old fogies—a considerably despised and useful class ; and by force of them, aided to some extent by the better parts of the Athenians themselves, who like a wide-awake life for six days, but do not object to a comparatively peaceful harbor on the seventh ; by the combination of all possible forces I say, the house of God is preserved in a good degree of sanctity in many places ; the ancient approved services go on for substance ; and only such departures from old-fashioned ways are permitted, as God will wink at, presumably, in view of the hardness of our hearts and the weakness of our frame and the beggarly elements whereof we are composed in both soul and body. But it is not as it was, when the New England ministers could preach an hour and then preach another hour ; and could even pray an hour and on particular occasions make a service six hours long, with never a particle of sensational material in it all, nor one word put in for mere entertainment's sake, from beginning to end, nor a single thing done to ease the strain of strict attention, or to comfort the stationary and fixed mortal bodies of those fine old Puritans. Those days are gone. Somehow they have left us. And now men lecture on the legitimate elements of variety in the public services of the Church, as though the Athenian great-grandsons of those same iron-built fathers must be humored in their desire for varied—not to say variegated—exercises in the Sanctuary.

My brethren, I am not going to surrender anything important to this outcry for ease and entertainment in the house and worship of God, but I will indicate certain points where it is not impossible to introduce that diversity which even the most sanctified souls do really enjoy ; and more than that, turn it to good spiritual account. Let it be granted that in certain great staples, public worship is to be the same, unchangeable forever ; as, that it is to be made up of prayer, praise musically expressed, Scriptural readings, preaching and the several ordinances which the Scriptures make binding on us ; and that these solid terms and details of any and every service are to be strung along in an outline order, which must be approximately the



same for all time ; let so much as that be conceded (as it will be by people who think the subject out) ; and then the several easements that may be let in for soul and body, are something like the following.

First, as our bodies naturally abhor a fixed posture if it is too long continued, and as a body full of abhorrence can greatly discompose the man in it and spoil his worship, it is best that our services should call for quite a little change of posture as they move on. If a service is properly organized, it will require diversified bodily movements. There is a congregation of sensible people, for whom I have sometimes officiated, that unanimously keep to their seats and rise not at all, until the singing of the last hymn ; and they do not rise then on any feeling that God's praise should not be sung down-sitting, rather than in a posture of special reverence ; for if any such feeling was in them they would rise at the several times when his praise is sung in the earlier parts of the hour—no, they rise, partly because it seems about time so to do, and partly because once up, they are already to march out and lose no time, so soon as the benediction, which immediately follows the hymn, is spoken. Now that people are continually violating one of the solemn proprieties of God's house—inconsiderately of course, for they are a reverent people. They bow their heads in prayer. That address to God they take some sense of. Why then, do they not sense it when they move out towards God in song and make some bodily testimony corresponding, and thereby take some of the physical tediousness out of their service ?

I have been in assemblies, a very few, where, when I said, "Let us pray," scarcely any one went down at all. There they sat, as stiff-set as though head-bowing might lead on to some formalism. They were good enough people, most of them, but they had not given attention to the very axioms of right action before God. Posture is nothing and piety is everything, I presume they would say, if being challenged on the subject, they had the pluck to say anything.

When the officiating clergyman in the Protestant Episcopal Service, begins, "Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us," and so forth, the dearly beloved brethren in question get upon their feet to hear what he may have to say ; and they do it because it is more decent to stand when you are addressed by a person in a formal way ; and they ought therefore to stand through the sermon,

if it were practicable. I have never carefully examined the printed services of the great liturgical bodies, to see whether every bodily change therein required is founded on the nature of the particular act performed at each change, but I presume it is. Those liturgical Christians, taken all together, have made some study of such things and their worshipful practices are apt, to that extent, to be rationally grounded. The minister kneels in the prayers for the same reason that the congregation do ; because he then comes into the presence of God and speaks to him ; but in the Absolution he stands and they remain kneeling, because he is then God's spokesman to them and God's gift-bringer, while they are recipients from God, through him.

This matter is full of detail, but the main thing I am after in referring to it at all, is to bring out before you one particular wherein the public service may have some elasticity and not amount to a bodily imprisonment, especially to young children. When you sing, stand up, or do something to show that you know you have come to another turn in the ongo of the worship. When the prayer has been reached, bow down, or else stand up, as our fathers did—either way is Scriptural, at least do something. When you receive the benediction, bow your head, unless you are so stiff a congregationalist and so afraid of admitting the priesthood of the ministry, that you cannot conscientiously take an attitude which says that something did really come from God to you through that speaking man's—"The Lord bless you"—floating down from the pulpit. When the choir are singing their piece, you must settle for yourself what you had better do then. Theoretically they are praising God, very likely speaking for you in the matter, because you have never learned the fine, ethereal language they are using, in order to speak for yourself ; and therefore, it would seem you ought to stand up, just as you bow in prayer with the minister when he theoretically voices your prayer for you. And by these several corporeal flexibilities, you shall not merely adjust yourself to the varying realities and the obvious decorums of the occasion, but do something to save yourself from a feeling of monotonousness in the church worship.

Again, the minister can introduce certain reliefs, by cultivating a reasonable variety in the tones of his voice and a reasonable versatility in his gestures, too, I may add. Perhaps you will feel that I am detaining you on minimum particulars now, and I do not myself

suppose that tones and gestures in a preacher are so momentous as piety. A man cannot get into heaven by the lift of his own oratory, so fast as he can by the lift of his own piety. Still when he comes to the tug of lifting others into that bright haven, the awful fact is, that voice and a few apparently small things of that sort, are among the maxima of personal influence. It is one of the unescapable disadvantages of preachers as compared with all other orators, that their subjects of discourse, being uniformly grave ones, and not unfrequently even terrible subjects, tend towards and almost compel solemn vocal tones, and also easily carry a man into cadenced tones, otherwise called "sing-song." That mellifluous embroidering of grave tones which our church organists practice, we preachers cannot emulate, for we use an organ of only one pipe—though a pipe of much range—and then, if the truth must be told, ministers are more serious men than organists, on the average, and before God do not dare put even their one pipe through all its possible variations, when they preach. However, we must shun monotony. Other things being equal, that will at least double the length of our pastorate. I have been in this evil world longer than you have, young men, and that is one of the things I have discovered.

As to monotonous gestures, those appear only on those men who have given careful attention and a good deal of practice to delivery. Probably they have been in the hands of some teacher of oratory, have learned rules of gesture and have studiously made gestures in private. I heard a minister of some name and some pith, repeat, memoriter, a thoroughly elaborated, doctrinal sermon, an hour long ; and knowing his memoriter habit, I expected to notice that he said the same words that he did before ; but I declare unto you, he made the same gestures all through—for, all the principal gestures, the absolutely killing ones, I could definitely recollect. They were good and they came in all along at exactly the same points as on the first occasion. You might say, if they were at the right points on the first occasion, why should they be changed to the wrong points on the second for the sake of variety ; and perhaps I could not answer you, but I could suggest and I would suggest, that a certain effect of monotony cannot be escaped if preachers are going to cut-and-dry things in that manner. Cutting-and-drying, when carried beyond a certain line, becomes what is known a mannerism ; and did you ever know anybody who liked mannerism when he really took a full sense of the thing? Vary your voices

then, gentlemen, so much as circumstances will permit, and when you come to giving us gestures, let us have a diversiform assortment. Let up on your solemnity a bit, for the time being, if you cannot make your voice flexile otherwise ; and give us a change from gestures, even in the form of non-gesturing for a space, so that we may the more relish your prepared, proper and infallible gestures, when you get back to them.

Thirdly, do not make your services monotonous in and by your strong push for unity in the service. I spoke to some of you here two years ago, of a Communion service I had attended just before, wherein the able and well-known man who conducted it, came near being the death of us, because in his Invocation at the start, he took us straight to the Holy table and to the centermost and most heart-moving realities of it ; and then in his choice of the hymn immediately following, did the same thing ; and then read an intense Scripture in the same line and then prayed at length, on the same subject, mostly ; and preached on it three quarters of an hour and then called us to sing one of the fervid, good hymns on the Passion of the Lord ; and finally invited the meagre remainders of our feeling to warm up to what was really the focus of the occasion ; though as you see, that focus had been by him carried back out of its place to the opening act of the service—the Invocation—and from that had been kept moving along down through all the details of the worship, a perpetually present and traveling thing. The man or woman in the pew, who had moved through the foregoing parts of the exercises that day with only a languid enlistment of his or her feeling—or possibly with no enlistment at all—could accept that invitation to warm up when the table was at last reached ; but I, who had been fool enough to start off with the minister in his Invocation and warm up there and be as over-quick as he was ; and thereafter had kept warmed up every time he asked me to ; I, be it said had come to the end of my responsiveness ; and what he did at the blessed table was of comparatively no account to me. I was as empty as a last year's nest. I had been privileged to be present and assist at a magnificent instance of unity, but it was one of those cases referred to by the late Duke of Wellington, where a victory is worse than a defeat.

Brethren, unity is not incompatible with variety. I have carefully counted the separate and different particulars of that Sunday morning's transaction ; and I find there were eleven of them, if not

twelve—enough, in conscience, to have secured the most ample diversity. And the way to secure it, was to make the seven particulars that antedated the administration of the Supper, just range the utmost permissible limits of the inner circles of the Christian religion. There was no need to go out of sight of Calvary and the Cross. No ; it was necessary on that occasion to keep near to it in hymn, prayer, Bible lesson and sermon ; but if the minister had made his Invocation (that which Invocations always should be), an asking of God's blessing on that Service then begun, (that and nothing more) and the hymn following, a magnification of the Lord's day ; and the Scriptural lesson a history of the origin of the Jewish passover (that for example), and the succeeding long prayer, as rangey a thing as prayer ever has the conscience to be ; and the sermon a root discussion of self-sacrifice, from the text—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit,"—if these had been the preliminaries, would they not have been in perfect unity with the ceremony to follow ; and yet would any decent man have had the least sense of being tired on account of monotony ?

So at a funeral, if that happens which I have sometimes known to happen, that three prayers are offered by two or three ministers, at the house and at the grave-side, and that in those successive prayers, all those especially bereaved are photographed in outline and commended to God three times over ; to be sure unity is secured, but it is the wearisome unity of a monotone, whereas, in all Christian services, the only right unity is that which you see in a good picture, where there are never-so-many elements, or forms of material present ; human figures, hills and valleys, trees, breadths of haze, lights, sky-lines and what not ; but all are victoriously reduced to the oneness of an absolute composition, by that unifying genius which no man can analyze and tell how it does what it does, but in which man is the image of the God who made him, as wonderfully as at any other point of his mental organism, save only his moral attributes and the workings thereof. The organization of a service, then, so that while it may be very plural in its details and full of variety, it shall be a solid unity, is a work of art, a real composition, and it needs some thought and care. Still further, the result to be secured is such a choice one and in such a choice field, that it is worth some attention. It requires some attention, and some attention not only to compose and unify the legitimate elements of variety



in God's worship, but to eliminate all spurious elements, sensationalism, vain-glorious music, eloquent prayers, rituals that are the product of one local minister's brain, unsaturated by the liturgical wisdom of the ages ; in short, all the spawn of the spurious.

Fourthly, a word as to variety in sermons. How shall sermonizers be various and so not tire their audiences? Shall they go outside of Christianity and outside of the Bible for fresh and taking topics ; topics that men are immersed in at the moment and are therefore likely to give their attention to if their minister takes them up—such as the election, the murder, the strike of laborers, the great defalcation, the last scientific or other book? No—Christianity is fertile enough in topics, if you only find them. If you want to allude to the murder and the defalcation and the book, as illustrating or as clinching some Christian thing about which you are talking, very well ; but do not make the body of your discourse of secular material and stuff.

But just as energetically as I say, do not go outside of Christianity—in a large interpretation of that word Christianity—do I add : be careful, while you are observing those true and obvious limits, be careful not to make your Christian sermon itself dull, by too exclusive preaching on a small assortment of truths. You have heard it said of some men, that they have only about one sermon. They preach from a good many texts and on a good many subjects, but they always preach the same sermon. All roads lead to Rome ; and these preachers in all their themes bring up at their dear Rome presently. At a certain Yale commencement, as much as thirty years ago, the annual *concio ad clerum* was preached by the Rev. George Perkins, and his subject had been given him a year beforehand by the General Association of Connecticut, and it was Christian Sanctification, Perkins was a strong man and an excellent and successful parish minister, and a redoubtable, much-speaking anti-slavery man. We all knew what he would most want to discuss in that *concio* of his, but, said we, “he is tied up for once ; Christian Sanctification is his subject, unanimously voted to him and there he is.” Perkins was as able to discuss Sanctification as the next man, he was considerably sanctified himself ; but when we flocked into yonder Church on The Green, to hear him, he gave us for his first sentence, these words :—“The greatest hindrance to sanctification in this country, is Slavery ;” and from that he went on to give us of his plain-spoken, rousing and good anti-slavery speeches. I

am not here to say whether he did right or wrong, but I want to caution you against habitually having one discourse, whatever your subject may be, or at most but half a dozen discourses ; better have more. We all know that Christianity has her major truths and her minor truths ; and that majors may go into sermons oftener than minors ; and that some majors are so immensely major (the majors of the majors), that tones from them—tones direct or tones far-away and faint—may reasonably be heard in a good part of our public utterances ; but to say, as some men have been known to, that we will never preach a sermon from which a man listening might not learn the way of salvation and be saved then and there, if he never heard a sermon before, is to limit one's self and cut off one's variety and provide for our being tiresome over much.

Also, why should every sermon that we preach be constructed in one and the same way, as so many heads and two applications, one to saints and one to sinners ; why not make lots of sermons with no heads and no applications, like a poem ? The highest kind of poem never has heads, much less thrusts them forth and calls the world to make a note of them. It has a skeleton and points of juncture and articulation in the skeleton, but all that is concealed, not in any guile, or even with intention, any more than a born infant is deliberately planned and plotted to conceal that frame work which he undoubtedly has. A born sermon never advertises its joints, first, second, third and fourth and so on ; though a very important class of sermons reasonably may and often do and even perhaps must ; I refer to such as are formulated by the formulative intellect, being manufactured rather than born and designed to instruct rather than magnetize.

Again, why should a preacher be habitually didactic, or habitually expository, or habitually hortatory, or habitually argumentative, or habitually pathetic and think he has failed if somewhere in his discourse he has not visibly wept, or let a tremulo into his voice. There is enough to weep about, more than enough, and a preacher had better let himself do it sometime before he dies, and perhaps several times, but why found his reputation on that and be monotonous about it. There is nothing more tedious than tears, if they are let on too frequently. "This is a poor community to cry in," said one of my deacons one day, when we were querying whether to call in a certain emotional evangelist. "This is a very poor community to cry in."

And it is a poor community to do any one thing in monotonously. All sorts of sermons are open to us to preach. And let us preach them. Sometimes we may take the modern newspaper article for our model and be short, direct and business-like, letting exordiums and perorations, heads and applications, appeal and hortations and all that kind of valuable machinery go. Sometimes, however, we may put all the machinery in ; and speak an hour perhaps in order to get it in. Sometimes we may wrestle on a subject till we exhaust it, but more often we had better take a lesser task and treat just an interesting corner only of the subject, getting through in twenty minutes, if we have good luck. Why be monotonous, I say again. Why have certain doctrines that you dearly love and build up your experience on ; and then feel like a fish out of water, if you are not speaking on those. You are a Calvinist, I will suppose. As likely as not you are an Arminian, (Arminians are pretty thick, the Methodists being responsible for making a swarm of them) ; but I will suppose that you are a Calvinist. So you will preach Calvinism. All right, do it ; but the items of agreement between you and Arminius are more than your items of disagreement ; therefore, why not multifold your preaching and ease your hearers, by going over among those items frequently ? Not merely would you thus give comfort as not seeming to them monotonous, and amaze your congregation by your versatility as a man of mind, but when you got back from your excursion among those neutral items and began to enforce your Calvinism once again on the people, you would find that you were impressing them decidedly more than would have been possible, had you stood by your Calvinistic specialties straight along and fed them out to your sheep, unmitigated and undiversified by perhaps less condensed food. We have learned in physiology, that our nutriment should not be in the quintessence form always, but should be ameliorated by admixtures of lesser value and even by a certain ratio of what might be called trash material, that is, that cannot be assimilated but must go for waste ; and yet meanwhile may serve some mechanical, or other use in the processes of our systems.

Before I leave this subject of diverse sermonizing, among the rules for securing it, such as various reading and all kinds of contact with human life as it is and with Nature and with Art, I would like to mention prominently and in fact put before everything else, the rule that you must have contact at all points, contact at all points

rather than a few, with that world of multifarious material massed in the Bible. At first, it would seem as though all ministers inevitably would have this contact with the entire contents of the Book ; but it is not so. The undeniable presence in the world of monotonous preaching proves that. Men could not be monotonous if they had possessed themselves of the universality of this volume, that is if they had drawn their topics from all parts of it, enforcing upon themselves some sort of system in the matter, instead of going into the book hap-hazard when they wanted a sermon, after the fashion of the grab-bag. Grab-bag selection exposes us to the peril of preaching our whole life through, without using at all some of the material that the Bible has waiting for us. That is why I took it upon me last year when I was here, to speak some kind words about that round-and-round of contemplations, prayers, services and sermons established and made sure by the Christian Year, that device of the liturgical communions of the world. I said then, and I say now, that I do not hold that up as a divinely ordained curriculum at all ; I do not even say it is the best one ; but I insist that some cycle or system is necessary, if ministers are going to be made certain to preach on all proper and good pulpit themes, and preach on them with a duly distributed emphasis on each theme. Let a preacher provide his own curriculum, if he does not entirely relish one drawn out by the church at large. I am sure however, if somehow he could be induced to let the godly wisdom of somebody besides himself be called in, it would plainly appear in the result, that the godly wisdom of ages on ages, and millions on millions of men—hosts of whom were exceedingly well-furnished men—adds up larger, as a rule, than one man's single, solitary and lonesome wisdom. But no matter about that, if only he will start out to have his weekly choice of pulpit subjects regulated in the main by a deliberately chosen and previously-established order, even if it must be that nobody but himself deliberately choose and establish it, let him move by a doctrinal order if that suits ; engaging with himself to make the circuit of all Christian doctrine in the course of twelve months or two years say, using his Sunday mornings for it, and leaving his second sermon, each Sunday, to be given up to more miscellaneous and disorderly discourses. Let him take his liberty, I repeat, as to the particular order he will obey ; taking care simply that his pet order be formulated on a Biblical basis and therefore includes all preachable things ; each preachable thing

being magnified by him, or only moderately magnified, according as it is moderately magnified or not in Holy Writ itself.

You understand, brethren, I am harping as I do on a systematized flow of subjects, with only one thought in my mind, although movement by system has numbers of advantages—only one thought, namely: that if you go by some preconsidered and thoughtfully prepared cycle, in your preaching, you are likely to be a man of variety and so far fascinating and not dull. Your cycle, of course, whatever form it takes, must rest on the Bible as a whole and not on the Bible in spots; therefore your multiformity as a preacher will correspond to the almost illimitable multiformity of the Bible itself. So much as to sermons.

Fifthly, let us look at prayers. And there I touch more difficult ground. You cannot limber your voice much in prayers and secure variety in that way, and you certainly cannot make many gestures; and it is preordained in the nature of things, that prayer shall have certain fixed features, such as confession, supplication, intercession and thanksgiving; and besides, if you undertake to make yourself too interesting in prayer, by an ever-changing way of treating confession, supplication, intercession and thanksgiving, you are kept on such a keen intellectual and rhetorical jump that neither you nor your congregation can really pray. As intellectualists and rhetoricians you may have a very fine time indeed and be something worth going to, but as petitioners before God, you are a failure and a public nuisance. So then, as regards prayer many are led to say: Let the prayers of the Church be written out and prescribed; let us have just that uniformity and run the risk of the tedium of repetitioners—so much risk as there actually is; which is not much. But others, while they admit the comparatively narrow range for versatility in prayer to which we are confined, proceed to add: But within that range, we can legitimately do some things to escape the drone of sameness; for instance, we need not make a distinct effort to get into the same phraseologies every Sunday; we may avail ourselves of so much diversity of diction as is natural to us; and again, we may be pastorly in our hearts, so that when we are presenting to God the case of our people, we slip easily and sweetly in to a good deal of minuteness and have the advantage of the endless variety of minuteness; moreover, if the minister is as religious as he ought to be and when he prays, moves in on God by the Holy Ghost and not by his own impulse, he will always



seem fresh, diversified and satisfactory, whether he touches customary points or unc customary, and whether his vocabulary is new every Sunday or no ; and one of the great advantages of extemporized prayer (they add), comes in there ; prayer in its ideal, as carrying us into the presence of the Most High God and enforcing upon us therefore, particularly, a high-type utterance, is such a total impossibility for mortal man, that perforce he is thrown upon the aid of the Holy Ghost, and once brought to that, it is not possible, as was said, that he should be monotonous and uninteresting. There may be a good share of sameness in him from Sunday to Sunday, his bump of language may be small and his natural bump for ideas may be small, but an inspired man's small bump is better than the powerful bump of a man uninspired just as Mr. Moody's ignorance, which he once said he had consecrated to God, is more of a force for all the practical purposes of the Kingdom of God, than tons of unconsecrated learning.

Thus runs the talk, pro and con. And in the midst of it we must accept the denominational position and pulpit and liturgical usage wherein God seems to place us, and do the best we can. My own experience of public prayer is hardly worth referring to, except perhaps as a warning ; but with my tendency to amplification, not to say inflation, and considering, on the other hand, the insatiable desire for brevity which distinguishes the modern congregation, I have concluded at last to be satisfied if I can get into each prayer some of the essential objective and other elements of prayer. In respect of the proper spirit in prayer, we assuredly should not be satisfied unless that is in always and every time ; but as respects everything else, we should not be too hard upon ourselves. I know it is a fallacy to say that the Publican's prayer—"Lord be merciful to me a sinner ;" and the prayer of the crucified malefactor, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom ;" and the prayer of Peter sinking in the waters of Galilee, "Lord save me"—I know it is a fallacy to mention these and like instances, as legitimating the omission from public prayer of the larger part of the elements of prayer full and complete ; but it is a comfort to think of these instances, nevertheless. The thief on the cross had not time to go through the entire service of the Book of Common Prayer and close with a recessional hymn ; neither had Peter. They were both in an emergency. But not much more of an emergency than a modern, extempore minister is in, leading the prayers of a congre-

gation with the remorseless church clock ticking in front of him and the modern man in the pew, with watch in hand timing his progress. The moral pressure on him to get through is strong, knowing as he does that if moral pressure fails on him and he keeps on being lengthy from year to year, by and by physical pressure will take the field and carry him off out of that parish. I feel then, for myself, that all I can engage to do, as regards completeness of prayer made interesting and profitable by due versatility, is to do the best I can. And angels could do no more. I will aim at a prayerful spirit. I will aim to be tolerably brief. And as to things further, I will take my chance ; using what intellect, taste, power of expression, pastorly thoughtfulness, Biblical scope and so on, I happen to have at the moment and throwing myself on the charitable consideration of the assembly, be it more or be it less. It is one of the stock remarks of the liturgists though, that all such well-meaning clergymen, however inspired, do at last have ruts in which they move, though not conscious of it always. All I can say is, I hope this is a slander. Some of the extemporizing ministers reply that they know it is. And there I leave the case.

Sixthly, how shall we escape sameness in the administration of ordinances and in the management of ceremonial occasions that are not ordinances? I think I notice a growing disposition all around not to escape sameness in these matters, but to let it in and love it and deal it out to the people and make them likewise love it. Most of the young and old couples now-a-days, in the regions where I live at any rate, when they come to the solemnities of wedlock, desire to be married in the use of some determinate office or ritual that a good many other couples have used safely and successfully. Whether it is that they distrust the faculties of the clergy, or that formalism is on the increase, or that a wedding has come to be thought more of an occasion than it used to be, or that in the alarming increase of divorce there is a corresponding instinctive desire to forestall divorce by the introduction of more nuptial pomp, impression and nail-fast ceremony, I know not ; but the drift is all one way. And I like to humor it. I like it for the parties concerned and I like it for myself. It comforts my ceremonial consciousness, (whatever that may mean), to do just as those couples say. So far as variety is concerned, every wedding is such a fresh thing, in its own self and essentially, that no repetitiousness of ritual can tame it down, I find. A Sunday's service may be humdrum by the

operation of various causes ; but a wedding never. Every bride is a new instance of beauty and sweet expectancy ; every bridegroom is more captivating than he ever was before. Every wedding march that the sympathetic organ careers through seems as good as new ; and then there are the flowers and the people and the girl's father and mother, with their hearts full of crying and laughing both ; while all other hearts all around-about are sympathetically in much the same predicament ; and now if, when the rejoicing organ stops and the people hush down, the minister lifts up his voice and speaks forth an order of words wherein you can hear a sound of all generations and can feel the touch of innumerable like gracious occasions, do you suppose that it necessarily quenches that wedding ? I never found it so. It lies in the very nature of ceremony to be repetitious ; to follow well-known, oft-repeated lines of action and utterance. It is not possible to get any ceremoniousness at all in, on the principle of helter-skelter. Some extreme persons, in order to forestall formalism and vain-gloriousness, would just deify helter-skelter and have that for the one embellishment of what are called occasions ; for instance, making all weddings different from all others ; and administering even the Sacraments of the Church in at least so much free-and-easiness that the congregation cannot tell quite what is coming.

Well, speaking of ordinances, it is inevitable that there should be a large constant or unchangeable element in them all. That, at any rate. To begin low down and take a perfectly safe position, I should say that in every infant baptism there must be an infant. There is no chance for variety and originality and helter-skelter there. And there must be some responsible person, or persons, to present the infant. And there must be water, more or less. And a certain uniform, unchangeable act must be performed ; in which act certain ideas are involved always—which essential ideas it is customary to express. Baptism is not an ever-fluctuating mere show, but back of all the conventional or ritual drapery of it, there lies an unchangeable core of reality ; a great core it is too, else baptism could not keep up century after century.

And similarly, in the Lord's Supper there are essential things which can never be changed, because they are essential. Helter-skelter must keep away.

But these essentials of an ordinance being secured, God leaves us to our freedom, only stipulating that in all our ceremonial

amplifications we keep in the line of the core-realities of the ordinance and simply give those core-realities a more voluminous expression, just as he insists that a seed, if it would not remain a seed (as most likely it would not), shall unfold itself in infallible conformity to the vital idea or type that is in it.

And now since I have spoken deprecatingly of picking out pulpit subjects from the Bible without any method, like children blindly fingering in a grab-bag, I desire to be consistent and advise you ; First and most certainly, not to extemporize on the spot your ritual additions to the core of God's ordinances, so that nobody can begin to tell what is impending ; and secondly, if you do not think it best to subject yourself verbatim to any ritual thus far devised by men or churches not to manufacture your ritual in any grand desire for originality or popular variety, but far otherwise with a reverent and cultured desire to assimilate your ceremonial to those great outline features of ceremonial, which characterize alike every liturgy ever published by any branch of the church universal.

You observe, my brethren, that I am falling back again on my feeling that any ceremonial occasion, because it is just that, a ceremonial occasion and not something else, is entitled to a good measure of stability of procedure and must have it if it is not to sink from a ceremony, or even a church ordinance, into I do not know what,—into a thing of poor effect on all beholders and participants, at all events.

Finally, the only remaining forms of possible and decent variety in church seivices, that I need to mention, are, a wide selection of Scriptural lessons ; a similar wide selection of hymns to be sung ; and a reasonable use of what may be called special services ; praise meetings—anniversaries—services of benevolence or reform—commemorative meetings and others.

Some ministers are extremely conservative in regard to these last. You cannot get into their church buildings with your mass meetings in furtherance of this and that. They uphold the regular, orderly worship of the church, they say. Our Protestant Episcopal brethren are rather careful on that point. Others are ready to let in almost anything that promises any good to man—to his body or his soul—or to any of his interests. Secular lectures may come in ; and political assemblies may come in, if only they have some show of moral intentions ; and town fairs, educational conventions, conventions to get women their rights—yes, the innumerable ferment of this practical, man-loving nineteenth century may come in.

I think that when these things come along naturally—the best of them—they may be accepted as a good thing enough in the sanctuary, especially if the place where we live has no public-hall ; but I would not artificially get up occasions for the one purpose of variety, that people may get their religion in unusual and perhaps partially disguised forms. I do not argue the matter, but leave it there.

The selection of Scriptures and hymns is more important to be attended to ; but I have already laid down the principles that should govern that. Half the time, when I exchange pulpits with a brother minister, I find when I get home that he has given out to my people some hymn that I never did. I look that hymn over and get some one to play or sing to me the tune to which it is set in our church book and I find probably that it is as good as many hymns which I have given out. Thereupon I reflect afresh on my own limitations and wonder why I am not more all-ranging than I am. I tell you, brethren, we all need watching lest we grow narrow and set and therefore stupid, in our preferences and tastes. A private man may grow stupid if he wants to, but a minister must not, because if he does, this stupidity of his is the measure and limit of the opportunities of a whole congregation. They have to sing his narrowly-selected few hymns. And they have to hear, mark, learn and inwardly digest his ever-recurring little round of Scriptural readings ; the copious, round-about, all-sided, mighty Word and Book of God, being scrimped to the dimensions of his individuality and not suffered to speak with more than half its voices. I consider an established lectionary as an almost necessary thing in all churches. Let alone in this presence—this strong congregational presence—the question who shall establish the lectionary ; there ought to be one. The Congregational Conference in this State of Connecticut ought to issue one for our state ministers to look at. They need not worship it—that would be uncongregational—but they could look at it and offer themselves to be enticed by it ; and the beauty of it is, they could use it and their peoples know it not. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in the way of such a movement is, that so many of our ministers are under the impression that the sermon they have in the pulpit with them, must determine the lesson that shall be read that day. Unity of impression requires that, they fancy ; whereas it would be an aid to impression if they did not make the lessons, the hymns and all the prayers, revolve around



that one manuscript, even as it would have been an aid to every interest involved if that minister who made everything revolve around the communion service, as I explained to you, had diversified the occasion more.

But why do not we all use the well-considered and wide-sweeping lectionary of the Protestant Episcopal Church? Because that scheme of Lessons is grounded on the Christian Year—an invention which we all respect as a well-intentioned effort to provide an ample and thoroughly Christian cultus, but which for historical and other reasons many of us have not adopted and perhaps never shall. So then, we had better begin to make a lesson-order of our own and see how we come out. If we come out as well as the Episcopalians have and furnish for ourselves a round of readings, wherein all parts of the Bible are honored, we need not be ashamed; whatever principle of selection we adopt. But I want something. I want it for myself. I want to see my Brethren in it. I want to have you young ministers put through that orderly march and to see you absorb the insensible culture of it and become Catholic in your taste and Biblical, rather than denominational in your theology, fat with the fatness of many foods rather than lean and grim through feeding on this or that special food.

For the man who has established his lectionary, by the logic of the case has therein established the course of his sermonizing also; or what is the same thing, the course of his thinking; the shape therefore of his entire religious development.

I leave these freely-spoken thoughts with you, dear brethren, to sift, expurgate, chew upon and charge against me, if need be.

## ROUTINE: ITS PERILS AND ITS VALUES.

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At first I looked for a better word than routine to describe what I am after ; for so many people and ministers have come under the supreme influence of the Perils of Routine, that the term itself has a meanish kind of savor, and it makes one draw a tired, long breath, just to hear the sound of it. But I found it was the best I could do, all things considered, and so I move out and forth under the burden of it. However, in its use I shall refer simply to a fixed round-and-round. It does not hurt the planets to go round and round, neither does it hurt the Maker of the planets to have them do it ; and it seems to be proven, therefore, at the very beginning, that routine is not necessarily bad. It is bad or not, just according to the creature that is in the round-and-round. The right kind of a man or minister finds it beautiful, is as happy in it as the stars in their courses, and as much helped along.

I wish, friends, you would consider this gigantic, multiplex, eternal, circularity over our heads here in the sky, and all about, and let it prepossess you a little in favor of Routine. It is a curious and fascinating circumstance that God has builded his universe to go in ever-repeated circles so much. On the face of it, it looks as though the curve had something in it essentially delightful to his mind ; and that the countless whirl of things along their curved paths in such a wide immensity and in such perilous-looking, hair-breadth ins-and-outs among themselves, were a most satisfactory spectacle to his eyes, he being able, such is his boundless faculty, to contemplate it in its magnificent entirety at a glance, rather than pick it up in laborious piecemeal as our wretched little faculties do.

I know it would fairly intoxicate a man to look down on some good-sized handiwork of his own like that and watch the interplay of the thing, the junctures made by the many movements, and get the perfect harmony and co-ordination all through: all set in cycles also, and the eternal grace of cycles. I never heard that there was any mechanical difficulty in setting up a universe on the rectangular principle mainly, with its endless jerks on the feeling of all beholders. Neither can I imagine that there would have been any mechanical difficulty or any inability whatever, as respects the measure of God's power, in fashioning and running a creation wherein the fact of a thing's having occurred once—as the rising of the sun, or the flood of the tide—would be sure proof that that same thing would never occur again to all eternity. The inconvenience of such a creation as that in the matter of laying our practical plans, and the sense of insecurity and apprehension which it would shed abroad in men's minds, would be something, evidently; for example if I agreed to lecture here at three o'clock, and on arriving here found that the sun had not yet risen, and so far as heard from might not rise for a week, or perhaps a year, or possibly never, having gone off to the outposts of God's realm as though on some mysterious lark—the inconvenience and anxiety, I say, of such an infinite organization of desultoriness as that would have been painful; but such an organization would have been practicable, I take it, to a being of infinite power. It would have only been universalizing what is supposed to occur in the case of a miracle; that unforeseeable irruption among the fine old and much beloved uniformities of Nature. But our God is no such a person as that. It is constitutional with him to be a routinist considerably, and he has so made us that it is both a pleasure and a necessity to be routinists too.

And this natural predisposition to circularity in the Maker of all things, after it had embodied itself in great Nature and in the structure of man, was sure to manifest itself in other fields of God's activity. Therefore, in the only recorded instance where he has definitely and minutely expressed his mind in regard to human public worship of him; he has assimilated the worship to the cycles of the firmament—that first, as was naturally to be expected—then next as could not so easily have been anticipated, he started rotations of sevens; seven days, seven years, seven times seven years; a whole miscellany of sevens round-and-round, thus giving an artificial sanctity to the number seven forever. The number three also

got in. And in every substantial respect, that old Jewish cultus was methodical and repetitious to the last degree. When the priest in the temple had done a thing, or a definite set and circuit of things, he had to go over it all again, *verbatim*, and the priests themselves had their turns and relays of service in a fixed mathematical order of hours and days. These orders, cycles, mystical sevens and all the rest; these holy and sweet routines, could be converted into the numbness and tiresomeness of routine in an evil sense; and the Prophet Isaiah in his first chapter has opened himself out on that with a wholesome rage; nevertheless, the God of the orderly firmament took the responsibility of being orderly also (orderly and repetitious) in the worship which he appointed, and if men turn his good thing into an offence, on them be the curse.

I want to speak for a moment rather analytically on the special risks of any round-and-round.

We are so made—and I am glad we are—that habitual action—action in a much repeated circuit of action—tends to become automatic; and the bad feature of automatic action (on its religious side) is that it tends to be unreflective, inattentive, mechanical, formalistic, and does not sense what it is about. For example—an automatic man—a man who has prayed to God innumerable times and got dreadfully used to it so that he has only to start his prayer and the prayer runs on, hums and drones of itself—that man does not feel whose presence he is in, and whom he is speaking to. An automatic minister converses with people about their souls, and pretty much forgets all the while, the serious and tender realities he is handling. An automatic ritualist travels through the sufficiently excellent book of worship in his hand on any given Sunday, with so little conscious impression on his dulled feeling as he passes along that he comes to the end with only a hazy self-satisfaction as having wound his way through an appointed *opus operatum* spell, a deft sort of contrivance for blessing souls without their knowing it; that as distinguished from a recollected, volitional, attent and consciously receptive march from step to step of the service. And the greatest suggestion that we non-liturgical people make against printed rituals, is that they produce human automata too much; the very persons that Isaiah in his first chapter made his terrible stroke at. That is what we say, but of course the automata referred to are wide-awake enough yet to strike back.

An automatic theologian is a man who has a definite, limited

set of first-class doctrines, perhaps the sacred seven, perhaps the partially sacred three or five, on which he has run his mind around at the same gait three hundred thousand times; until now if he be started—whether by himself, by the nudge of an antagonist, or by a sudden wind, he goes the same track without the ghost of a volition in his own mind to help him along, but simply as an expert plays a piano; with no voluntary touch of this, that and the other key, as is proven by the fact that at the same time he is playing, this expert can carry on a conversation, or read a book, or absorb himself in a game of chess. It is easy to see where his mind is. It is on those other things. Therefore it is not on his playing. That playing is done by his unconscious self; that artificial and second self which has been created by diligent routine. Well, this theologian referred to, this finely developed machine, as he does not run by conscious intelligence, so he is not accessible to the attacks of intelligence from the outside. You cannot upset his theology. Neither can you modify it. Neither can you cause it to expand from its own core, and be itself, yet bigger. That would be contrary to the genius of iteration and automatism. Automatism in man is parallel to instinct in animals. The animals are born with their instincts, while men get up their automatism by force of routine. But, once gotten up, it is instinct over again pretty much. The little duck just out of his shell runs to the water infallibly. If he were omniscient, he could not do it more surely. But that duck is not omniscient. He is not even reasonable. Therefore you cannot reason with him. He would remain a duck, even if Jonathan Edwards took him in hand. Well, he ought to. But that is not the reason that he does. No, he has no reason. I do not complain of him. I only protest against his being called intelligent.

Now, wherein does the theological automaton differ from the duck? In some particulars no doubt. First of all, he was not born so. God forbid. He originally selected his theology in the exercise of more or less mind. Perhaps he reasoned on it a good deal. Perhaps he took it by inheritance. Perhaps he was not capable of real reasoning, but was capable of fumbling or trying to reason and his theology is a resultant of his fumbblings, taken in the aggregate. But, whether in one way or another, he did secure his theology, and then he began to convert himself into our automaton. He ran his theological scheme through his mind over and over year



after year, with such sameness of argument, meditation and what not, and with such inattention to all distracting side-lights and new lights, that at last his whole nature (thus mysteriously are we made) began to keep step to the tune of it, and now that nature of his is like that cork leg, so famous in song ; it runs itself. Say, Predestination, and off it goes. Say, Free-Will ; Say, Irresistible Grace ; say a dozen different things that I might mention, and it acts like a hist-a-boy to that automaton. It winds him up and he buzzes till he runs down. Or considering him as a duck, he blindly starts for the water. What was not instinct in him at first, but a show of reason, is pure instinct now. I do not say he should not take to water, or to speak literally, that he ought not to hold to his theology ; but I say he should not hold it automatically. He did not start it so. He started his theology like a flexible human being. He thought—more or less, as I have said before—he paused, he inquired, he asked his neighbors perhaps, he prayed about the matter, and a thing that started in that way, why should it not be kept up in that way ? If the way was good enough to begin with, it is good enough to keep on with. He is older now than he was at first, and he has more neighbors to ask, and more light has had time to break forth out of God's holy word ; the Book has even been revised since he began to be an automaton ; and he is losing all this, and how can theology ever make any advance either in him or in the world, if things are to be carried on in his fashion ?

Moreover, if he ever undertakes to preach, the people will not be stimulated by him. They know a machine when they hear the creak of it. They know that the speaking automaton up there does not himself intensely taste the ideas that he is promulging. They know, too, that those words of his are not the live product of his mind on the spot, as fresh to him and as delightfully flavored to his perceiving taste, as though no one had ever thought of them before ; much less used them. For an automatic thinker is likely to be an automatic rhetorician. He uses the words that conventionalism dictates ; he has heard them all his life, and spoken them all his life, and worn all their original bloom off and totally lost their sap and the thrill of their root-meanings, and he handles them and tosses them off as so many dead things ; they are dead to himself ; and dead to his hearers because dead to him. I cannot explain it, but so it is, a man who does not reach the tongue of his mind down the whole length of the deep significance, physical, historical and

associational, of every term he uses in his public utterance, as the humming bird probes the heart of the flower with a quiver of delight, cannot pass those words of his over into listening minds in a way to start them into any particular quiver.

In expounding to you, as I now have, the insensibility and unconsciousness of mental movements automatically carried on, to which automatism routine undoubtedly tends, I have said the principal thing that can be said against routine. Still, I would like to add a word more in the same line. If a minister confines himself to the duties of his profession entirely, to sermonizing and pastorizing in their never-ceasing circuit, under the impression perhaps that it is his duty to do so, or possibly because by long separation from other things he has lost all relish for other things; it will surely hum-drum him by and by, lessen his vigor, lessen his zest, lessen the *elan* of his attacks; and lessen public interest in him. The subjects we treat are large and many sided, the human interests we manipulate are the supreme interests of life, and have in them great pathos and great fascination; nevertheless we must range beyond our parish and our preaching a good deal, if we are not going to lose our spring. We must read something beside theology. Poetry will be good for us. Fiction will be good for us in well-chosen doses. We should hear music. We should look into books of science. We should luxuriate in pictures. We should visit Wall street. We should go down to the sea in ships. We should have a very diversified circle of acquaintances; and be sure not to have them all alike. Some of them may be saints, but they need not all be. Some of them may be sombre, but some of them should be humorous, and occasionally one may even be of the twittering sort. Birds twitter, and bird-like natures always may. As I came along to this point in my lecture, I paused and began to run over in my mind the names, faces, manners, dress, character and history of those whom I know, crony with, and depend on; and I declare to you it was almost as good as a three day's outing to drop on to each one in that way, and fondly analyze them all. Human beings are exceedingly interesting. And they are put up in such different shapes! Under the general sameness, of course, that belongs to human nature, you find on a genial inspection and shape of each such an infinite miscellany of attributes, traits, idiosyncrasies, infirmities and pleasant forms of perverseness, as are partly comical, partly touching, partly amazing, partly admirable and partly

frightful besides. At any rate it is good to go among them. There are two kinds of recreation. One is to go to sleep, or what is the same thing, fold your hands, half-close your eyes, sit around and be stupid and let your nature carry on her insensible and unsearchable recuperations in you. The other way of recreation is to keep awake and keep pretty bright and simply move your mind around on things that you are not used to, things outside of your profession; public entertainments, excursions, "hunting, fishing and war," as we used to read in the old geographies. And especially upon the face of Nature do you move around—move slowly; loaf; Nature takes loafers into her arms and loves them, prefers them and tells them things and soaks her own peace into them and smooths out their seemingly hopeless kinks and hushes their nerves and eliminates from their make-up their artificialities and twists of dishonesty that they get in society and sends them back home feeling like a wood-nymph. That is my experience.

Recreation by diversifying your mental action! That is the idea. One night last week when I was writing this lecture, it suddenly staled on me. But I went off that evening to the regular meeting of the Liturgical Club, to which I belong; a club made up of three kinds of clerical men; Episcopalians, Catholic Apostolic ministers and a more feeble number of Congregationalists; and I watched the play of their strongly contrary individualities for some two hours, and played my own individuality too a little, and went home as good as new—and the next morning this tedious lecture fairly blossomed again.

That is the way it works. Do not wear yourself out in routines of labor.

And I may add—do not become so entirely a routinist in your work, especially in your intellectual work, that if it so happens some time that you are called on to do work outside of your dear routine, it will nearly incapacitate you. Some ministers cannot much more than half think, except as they are in their own library and at their own desk. And some ministers can not preach with any freedom and power in a strange pulpit or on an open platform or at a street corner. It has been true of some lawyers that they could not make an argument, if they could not have something to twirl in their fingers while speaking. A great many public speakers, (preachers generally they are,) have a regular motion of their body which has come to be necessary to the facile action of their intellects

—they rest on one foot and then on the other—or they turn their heads so and then so and then so again, or they oscillate in a balance, now on their heels and now on their toes, or they keep their hands traveling monotonously, or they make some particular and perhaps eccentric gesture with one hand, while if that hand were tied behind their back it would end all further possibility of intelligent utterance. It is not well to be a slave to routine.

I call your attention now to the second general head of my discourse, namely: The value of routine. I put value last and give it the advantage of a last mention, because I want to make my greatest impression with that, for, be the perils of routine what they may, I think you had better have them for the sake of the values mentioned. Well then listen while I recount those values.

First, in the matter of your church services—and perhaps in some of your other official services—it is a comfort to your people to have you a calculable man, not like that suppositious sun which I mentioned as not having risen yet when I reached here at three o'clock to lecture; nor even like a comet, which is sure to come sometime but nobody so far knows when; but rather like our actual old trustworthy sun, the orb that is always on time, not behind-hand and not before-hand and always just about so hot in summer and less hot in winter, always keeping his appointments with the other orbs, so that they all love him and can pre-arrange their daily and yearly affairs on the solid ground of his foreknown fidelities. That is the kind of minister to be, if you are to have the hearts of your people. They want to know whether you are going to call on them in the church to keep Easter in the Spring somewhere, or at Christmas time—whether at an infant baptism you will have an infant present or not—whether the ritual for morning and evening service which you have been moving in for some time, is likely to be turned end for end some Sunday, or totally supplanted by some new order, and whether in these total supplantings, as they promiscuously come along, a philosopher could discover any regulative principles, of before and after in the flow of the details.

It is a great advantage to your people to have you methodize your activities and functions to a certain extent. That first.

Secondly, it is a great advantage to yourself. Not to mention the satisfaction of noticing that your people are contentedly resting down on your orderly faithfulness, you can do more work and do it easier on system, than you can on spurt, lawlessness and disorder.

That is often said ; and it is true. And I am going to tell why. There are several wherefores.

If you have a method and stand to it every time you make the circuit of that method, your mind and body both do more and more catch the run of it, get used to it, fashion themselves to it and have it for their second nature, their instinct, yes, their automatism. I have reviled automatism in certain connections, but now I am going to praise it. There certainly are many kinds of work where the automatic principle is good enough. There are even many kinds that cannot be at all performed except as that principle is brought in. Let me illustrate that. The shortest cut between any point in the high air and a given point on the ground, is a curve, not a straight line but a curve ; and the hawk, when he dives for his prey, always travels that curve. He does it by instinct. If he had to do it as taught by some professor of mathematics, he would fail. And if his mind were as large as Plato's, instead of being nothing but a hawk's mind, it would not alter anything ; he simply could not keep that ideal line. Mere reason is not equal to finding its way practically along that curve. The passage must be made automatically. It must be in the hawk structurally and congenitally so to do.

Similarly, if Dr. Carver, when hundreds of glass balls are thrown into the air, is going to catch every one of them on the wing with his rifle and break them, or if the pianist is to rush through his complex, amazing fingerings with his eyes shut and his thoughts at the ends of the earth and with no more consciousness of directing that finger-work than though he were dead ; or if Mr. Blondin is to walk on a rope in the air across Niagara and wheel a wheel-barrow along the rope and for aught I know wheel himself in his wheel-barrow, and all in a poise as assured and safe as your poise when you tread a side-walk ; then in lack of any instinct for such astonishing doings, the men must drill themselves till they get up an instinct ; they must routine and routine and routine, I do not know how many hundreds of times ; routine their muscles and their whole bodily apparatus ; routine their perceptive faculties ; routine their concentration ; routine their entire selves in fact, until the greater part by far of their performance has passed beyond the lines of voluntary action clear out into absolute mechanicalism and they are scarcely more than hawks diving instinctively down the air short-cut.

There are many amazing achievements, like rope-walking, or the feats of gymnasts in the arena, or the miracles performed by the



sleight-of-hand man, which at first thought we should call physical wonders merely, and therefore illustrations simply of the great spontaneity of action to which the body may be brought by long practice ; but really there is as much mind as body in these doings, and the possibility of mental spontaneity at last is also illustrated by them. When somebody walks the rope, he does not do it in the use of the same kind of mental faculties that Milton used when he wrote *Paradise Lost*, or the lawyer uses in a great argument, or the preacher in his great discourse, or the high-class mathematician in some abstract discovery that he makes ; but that man up there on the rope uses mind after all and what mind he does use, he uses consummately. It is faculty in absolute drill and scarcely less infallible than the hawk's instinct rushing along his curve. Moreover it is the same grade of faculty that the carpenter uses when, with his trained eye, he makes instant judgment on such matters as size, form and distance ; or that the marksmen uses for similar purposes, or that even the painter uses when he arranges spaces, vistas, dimensions, heights and the like on his canvas. Moreover, there is a fine exhibition of disciplined will in the rope-walking, that steady will ; controlling muscle and nerve and the natural terrors of the mind, was not born such a will as that ; it was born like all other wills, pliable, timid and fluctuating ; but having been put upon its mettle daily for years and years, all those congenital infirmities have been worked out of it and there now it is, ruling the difficulties of the occasion and facing awful perils without the least conscious effort.

So then, it is not a bodily automatism alone that we are called to study and admire in these cases of skill and nerve, but a mental automatism quite as much ; in other words, a manikin on the rope in the gymnastic arena, or in the sleight of hand, could not begin to do what the man does ; and therefore while in these cases we are made to know the wonderful perfectibility of the human body by dint of routine practice, we are quite as certainly made to know the perfectibility of our intellectual parts by the same means and (by analogy) of our moral parts. If the several perceptive faculties which these physical experts bring into the field when they perform, can be made such exceedingly capable faculties, especially if they can be brought to operate in such entire unconsciousness of effort at the moment—yes more than that, if they can be brought to act absolutely well, even if the man turns his attention completely away to other matters, then we are prepared to believe that men can be worked

along, or routined along—for it is routine that does it—until they shall operate in a similar, non-voluntary, unlaborious, automatic manner, throughout the entire range of their higher attributes ; that is, let a man concentrate himself on the discipline of any one of his native powers and subject that selected power of his nature to the tremendous influence of a duly-protracted round-and-round and there is almost nothing that is not possible to be done. Done, for instance, for the imagination or for the memory or for the faculty of abstraction or for the conscience. And not only is it possible to push any single, selected faculty—as imagination, memory, abstraction or conscience—on thus into perfection ; but (what is much more marvelous), it is possible to harness up a team of faculties and diligently routine them together, even as raw soldiers are routined together in military drill, until said faculties are able to move in absolute co-ordination, in absolute spontaneity together, starting off all of them at the least crack of the whip on an automatic dead-run ; an unreflective dead-run, an unconscious dead-run, a machine-like run, an undirected run, a run of their own motion, a run by blind habit, a triumphant run too, such as could never have been approximated, save by the calling in of the automatic principle.

Every thinking man can illustrate this from his own history—and I can—thus : When I have gathered together a miscellaneous heap of memoranda for a sermon, the next step I need to take is to organize that miscellany under some terms of order. It will not do to tumble it out on my congregation in its present confusion and lack of unity, any more than it will do for a painter to empty the unassorted contents of his mind on to his canvas. Well, there are several possible principles of order whereby I may reduce that heap of valuable stuff to shape and make it comprehensible ; some of which principles are superficial and scarcely more dignified than a trick, while others are philosophical, deep and true. Among these perplexing possibles I must choose. I dare not undertake to say exactly how many of the faculties of my head are involved in this business that I am now describing. A good many ; I am sure of that. By my percepts I look at my written memoranda. By my memory I recall just what those very abridged and imperfect memoranda stand for. By something-or-other in me I decide the comparative value of those recorded items and the precise place or rank to which they therefore shall be assigned in my discourse. Undoubtedly that something or other in me is my religious nature, for one

thing. For instance, an item that on inspection seems a little irreverent, my reverence rejects. An item not wholly harmonious with the revealed truth of God, my reverence and my sanctified affection and my truthfulness, reject. Perhaps some one of these memoranda is full of fine analysis or full of ideality and I shall take hold and deal with it in the use of certain corresponding powers of my nature. It begins to look as though all there is of me were embarked in this enterprise. I am not marching into it by any single faculty or any six faculties, but I am using my entire team. It is a very complex case of cooperation. But I do it easily enough. As likely as not I will have that chaos subdued in a few minutes. I do not go around among my numerous faculties and exhort each one to do his very best now and keep the touch of the elbow with his brother faculties and not get into the see-saw of an ugly mule team. When I began to make sermons, I did a good deal of this exhorting and consumed much time on it. My team had never been hitched up before—not much at any rate—certainly they had not been hitched to anything so big as a sermon. So I had to exhort them and coax and flog. But I accepted myself as I was born and proceeded to practice coordination. I exhorted the faculties. And I whipped them. I did it every week. Some weeks I thought I had gained on it. Then again, I thought I had not. However, on the whole I did gain. And now when I get my chaos assembled—my unformulated materials of discourse—all I have to do is just what a famous public singer told a friend of mine she does when she is on the stage and wants her throat to trill. She practiced daily four years, she said, and had not even then succeeded in reaching the trill she was after. The physical organs, the organs of articulation and her mind, in the several faculties involved, were not yet quite co-efficient and simultaneous in their action. They could not catch the knack of hitching up together and trilling. But at last, suddenly, the lady could not tell how, the long-sought hitch-up was made and off went the trill like a bird. And ever since that moment she has had no difficulty. The inharmonious powers once harnessed up, never unharnessed. And now whenever she wants to perform that feat, she simply gives the word to the faculties concerned and they take care of it all. She feels and knows that they do it and not she. The performance is taken right out of her hands. What was volitional for a long time and accompanied with a great deal of pushing, is now involuntary; as involuntary

as the tick, tick, of a wound-up clock. So the minister with the stuff of a sermon on hand, which he is going to organize. For years it went hard with him to do that—rather hard—but now the hard is easy. He can start his trill with the snap of his finger. While he is simply looking at that mass of material, its atoms begin to move. And they do not move promiscuously either. Evidently they have been seized with a common idea. It is like the drum-call in an encampment of soldiers. The soldiers pour out innumerable and fly everywhither, but behold, they fly into companies and regiments. Those incoherent, insensate atoms (the minister's sermon stuff) do the same thing. They are not insensate. They have caught the hint of their master. It is a case of trill. They organize themselves. The minister does not do it. At most, he simply watches the thing go on and enjoys it. It is just like music, the way those atoms and crude masses make haste to get themselves into orderliness and there stand in beautiful array.

I have made too many words on this illustration, but it will stand for a large class of mental processes; processes self-moved, processes wherein numbers of our mental powers (to say nothing of our corporeal powers), conspire and pull together and do it spontaneously; processes that are never possible to be arrived at except in one way, namely; by long routine.

I beg you to take good notice of that last; that certain mental works never can be done at all, if routine is not called in and pushed and pushed till what was difficult has become second nature. All expert doings depend on just that and that is one of the greatest values of routine. I spoke of a long-practiced minister's looking his sermon stuff into shape in a few moments, but that is not the only line of work wherein his life-long routining tells. It tells in his amplification of that same discourse. It tells in the fairly bewitched way in which the entire mixed contents of the creation, like live things flock to the out-looks of his mind as he writes, begging to be let in for the illumination and enrichment of that discourse. He does not have to send out a search warrant for these things. Once he did and his search-warrants could not bring in more than a fraction of them either. But the warrants have been flying about and all abroad for twenty or thirty years now, and the creation has taken the hint at last, so that not a single search-warrant is any longer necessary. No; but as the heaped-up, unarranged mass of sermon-stock that I mentioned as waiting to be organized, suddenly

developed a stir in all its atoms, when the master's order-loving eye lighted thereon, so the innumerable things of the creation, so soon as they got wind of it that the minister had gone to his desk for amplification, took up an automatic movement towards that desk and poured in a very embarrassment of riches.

Or, take the minister as publicly extemporizing, whether in prayer or discourse. Once he always rose to utter himself with trepidation. He was not sure of his words and he was not sure of his ideas. But now he could go on forever. Sometimes he does. As likely as not he is eloquent. He does not try to be. He passed clear beyond trying years ago and now it is a case of trilling. Or it is like those amazing, musically-organized Italians who improvise. Those men versify and rhyme and sing and touch the whole thing off harmoniously on their guitars, with the facility of rippling brooks, because they have for a long time turned their whole peculiar nature—body, soul and spirit—into a routine of improvisation.

Of the same sort precisely, is that unconscious personal poise, and unconscious ease of conversation, repartee, fence and sparkle, which many a woman of the world displays. Such a man as Daniel Webster or John Foster and a thousand more exceedingly able men, look upon her as an almost supernatural being; she is so frightfully superior to them in all this beautiful airiness; whereas the truth is, her life has been spent in that thing until she ripples, glitters, tosses you on the sharp end of her bodkin and makes you to feel like a fool, automatically. She can sparkle as easily as you can prose on the weather.

In all the fine handicrafts, this same principle comes in abundantly of course. Proficiency in every department of human development depends on skill artificially worked up—worked up by routine.

And all these brilliant inventions in the practical field and these brilliant discoveries in the field of science, those of them which are reached by sudden intuitive outsprings of the mind rather than by methodical processes of reasoning—and there be many such—are apt to be the work of well-routined minds; solidly methodized minds; minds that have come to supreme facility by much precision and practice, so that, although seeming sudden, they are not mere guess-work and upstart movement but rather the blossoming of a plant which had in it the manifold potentialities of a blossom after all.



I say then, one of the uses of routine is facility. Work by method makes facile work at last, because we, in mind and body both, are capable of automatic action.

And speaking still further on the idea that he who works by method and consents to routine, works easier and can do more work, I mention this.

That routine gradually stamps out reluctance in us, so that we lie down under it as we do under any other inevitable and waste no time or friction in halting and rebelling. When the chaotic masses of the primal creation were first lumped into shapely globes and then set in the bondage of definite orbits and precise time-keeping, day and night forever, I can imagine that they did not enjoy it and would have sulked and possibly did sulk in the privacy of their own minds—but what was the use—the course of created things was established and started and there they were in the whirl of it. So sulking died out, just as a minister's groanings over his first sermons died out, as the routine that he had chosen for life went on and as his groanings over his first pastor-work died out. Routine kills groanings and the good breath thus saved is turned into work. I have certain days in the week when I make parish calls, I will suppose; a certain day or days when I attend to odds and ends; certain mornings when I write, certain hours when I receive the human family, certain hours when I pray, certain times when I fast, certain times when I take exercise, certain times when I cast overboard all work, empty myself of intentions and float round in a vacuum. I framed out my time in this manner years and years ago, I will still suppose, and now the question of times and seasons never comes up. It is fast-time say. Well, if I had not my routine established, I should beg off sometimes. There is nothing in fasting that is congenial to the bodily appetites. What they like is eating. And where a person is born very fleshly they like eating first rate. So I incline to beg-off. And I not merely beg but I reason. An ingenious man can see a good many alluring arguments for not fasting. So I might spend a week debating the question, procrastinating, shivering on the brink, wondering whether I had better ever begin. So in the matter of calls, I had rather read my book. And in the matter of my prayer, my newspaper has just come in, or my sensibilities are dull, or I am somehow in a mysterious inertia. Now the non-routine man fritters away half his time, petting his own reluctancies, his indisposition to take up tasks and disagreeable duties;

whereas, if his allotment of time from his God were clearly programmed and foreordained, when this or that duty arrived he would move to it with something very like spontaneity. Take it as respects the choice of topics for sermons. Many ministers spend almost as much time hunting topics, or selecting topics from those which they have hunted down, as they do in unfolding the same ; and withal, this hunting business is much more vexatious and killing than unfolding is. Supposing now this topic-hunter had a prearranged general order of topics. Supposing he was a Christian-year man. Supposing he was a doctrinal preacher and worked up a course of doctrinal sermons once in so long. Supposing he even took for his rule the tossing up of a penny and letting heads or tails decide. Suppose almost anything in the direction of method and routine. Do you not see that that ends hunting, in the main ? When a thing is nailed right on to a man by a prescribed order, he has nothing to do but take it and make the best of it and spend not a minute in further search, or in grumbling. You might imagine that a forced topic would breed grumbling, but it does not. Routine men find that it does not. At Christmas, Epiphany, Good-Friday, Easter, Ascension and Whit Sunday—those Christian-tides, for example—you are looked to, I will suppose, for a particular sort of sermon every year so long as you live. But this, like any other circuit that any reasonable man or Christian body is likely to adopt, is full of the best kind of suggestiveness to the mind ; so that when any given date or period arrives, the mere coming of it with its cargo of meanings starts the man into fertility straightforth. Moreover it lies in the nature of the mind, that so soon as it plainly discerns the inevitable—especially if it is a genial inevitable—it acts like those spontaneous atoms in the minister's pile of sermon-material, when the minister's awful eye rested upon them. They started with alacrity and any mind in its predetermined and unescapable circuit of thought always developes alacrity so that, verily that is fulfilled which William Wordsworth said in his now famous address to Duty :

Stern Lawgiver ! Yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face :

Then Wordsworth takes wing in a flight like the following, still apostrophizing Duty :—

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads;  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;  
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee are fresh and strong.

No doubt, each man of us ought to go to his duty in each case of duty by the pull in part at least of great motives consciously in him at the moment, and if we live long enough, and the grace of God to us-ward fails not, we shall eventually find ourselves in that state ; a state so blessed that it is hard to wait for its coming ; but at present, as a matter of fact, we all have our lethargies, when the pull in us and on us of motives is feeble ; and in these low times, rather than that we totally come short and leave our duty undone, it is well if we are started forth by the simple nudge and joggle of routine ; fasting, for instance, because the time for fasting has come, calling on the parishioners because it is the day for it, praying because it is the hour for prayer, and not because we so want to do. A debate might be raised on the exact moral worth of such performances as those, either to the performer or to those performed upon, but all debate is cut short the moment it is mentioned that God himself has appointed days, dates, hours and numerous circularities of human action, knowing, all the while, that not one man in all generations forever would come up to those appointments, each and all, and every time, unlaguidly. He knew we could not do it. Nevertheless he made the appointments. Therefore his mind must be that we take these our necessary, occasional torpidities with us, and go in to the duties. And if that is his mind, then ye may reasonably look for a blessing, in such unaffirmative, matter-of-course routine fidelities. And I think it may be noticed, in human life, that the steadfast time-keepers, the men that never ask permission of their moods to keep their engagements with God, and their engagements with men for God's sake, are blessed. They make better characters than the disciples of do-as-you-feel. They are honester. They cannot be tampered with. Put them in an awful gap, turn away your head five minutes, and then look back ; they are there still. Turn your head, if you want to, six months. Still they are there. Cicero's "*abūt, excessit, evasit, erupit*," and the rest, does not apply to them. They have not *erupit*. They have not even *abūt*. And they never will. What can you expect of a man that goes by his moods, never does any thing that he does not want to, or, at the best, procrastinates, hoping that sometime he will

want to. I say unto you, such an one has provided fundamentally for his own ruin, and for his own uselessness, considerably, among the children of men. The truth is, my Brother, by diligence you can kill your own moodiness and make yourself a steady-going-person. You can kill your moral moods, and you can kill your intellectual moods. I marvel when I notice how much more uniform the action of my own mind is than it once was. I can get something out of it any day. I do not say what, but something. Long ago, when I used to go to my study to think and write, I could not tell whether my mind would give down that day or not. Now I know. I know it will. So far as quantity of production is concerned, a stupid day is about as good as a bright one with me. And when a stupid writing-day happens along, I keep firmly to the routine of production and put up with some falling off in the quality, for fear that if I ease off on the routine, my once moody mind will fall from the grace of uniform productivity back into its original state of inconstancy, costiveness and inability, and have whole days of no yield whatever. Keep your sap running, lest it forget how.

As I come now to the close of this lecture, I begin to think of my own reputation for consistency, for did I not name it as one of the evils of automatism on its religious side, that it tends towards, even if it does not involve an inattentive, mechanical and therefore formalistic style of observance and duty-doing ; nevertheless, have I not gone boldly forward to magnify routine fidelities? I have not the least doubt that I could worm my way out of that incongruity if, after having spoken to you so long, I might take time to do the necessary amount of squirming. I can recollect the time when if I seemed to contradict myself, I was frightened ; but I have got over that. Now I go straight on and say what seems to be true as regards my subject, and take it for granted that all those sayings will fight it out among themselves and get a real concord and peace.

The problem to-day is to accept routine and even automatisms with their unquestionable advantages, and yet not take on any of their disadvantages. A very critical piece of navigation. But, Beloved, that is about where we mortals are in most things. It is like paddling a birch canoe. You must sit in the middle, sit perpendicular, not turn your head much either way, and part your hair in the middle (as some one has said), else you upset. Well, there is where we get discipline. In this life of ours, with its many forms

and instances of difficult navigation, we are to consider, to balance things, to watch ourselves, to secure preponderations often by the weight of a single hair, to run the gauntlet of many dangers and not be caught by any of them. That is what we are in the world for and out of it comes character.

A large amount of our activity, and a considerable part of our responsible action needs to be relegated to our automatic powers. After that is done there is no danger that there will not be hundreds of things left to be attended to volitionally and in full consciousness of what we are about. Take our constant walking as an illustration. We simply cannot give to it our voluntary attention. There is too much else to busy ourselves about. It must go on mechanically. Take the operations of an accountant. He adds up his long columns of figures and runs through his long processes with spontaneous inattention; and his business would kill him if it was not so. Take these mechanics who stand at a bench and do some one small thing over and over forever. We call them "skilled workmen," and pay them high wages, but this skill of theirs that we are willing to pay so much for, is simply the more or less automatic facility into which they have perseveringly routinized themselves. But their craft still requires from them a great deal of determined conscious attention, and by as much as their faculties operate automatically, by so much are their minds released and at liberty to give themselves to this conscious and considerate attention, and thus reach on towards perfection in their craft.

So in the domain of morals and religion. In so far as our numerous fidelities to man and God have come one after the other by long practice to be what you may call automatised, we are set free for the labors of intentional and effort-full action. By the grace of God our expectation is that some day our total action will be to a good degree automatised. At all events it will be spontaneous. It will come from us with ease and satisfaction. We believe this, because it has been promised. We believe it too because already, at particular times, under special inspirations of the Holy Ghost, the whole team of our lumbering and reluctant powers and energies have swung into a blithesome flight, a beautiful fury, a complete liberation, a something unvolitional and lyrical to the last degree. That is the ideal condition of man; and this automatism that I have said so much about, with its perils and its many values, is the foreshadow and similitude of that. And it is a precious thing that



even in the natural action of our natural powers, and so low down as these half-wrecked, corruptible bodies of ours, this automatic similitude and prophecy doth develop itself in never-so-many forms.



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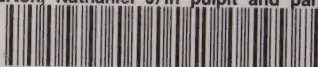
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